TWICE-TOLD TALMUD TALES

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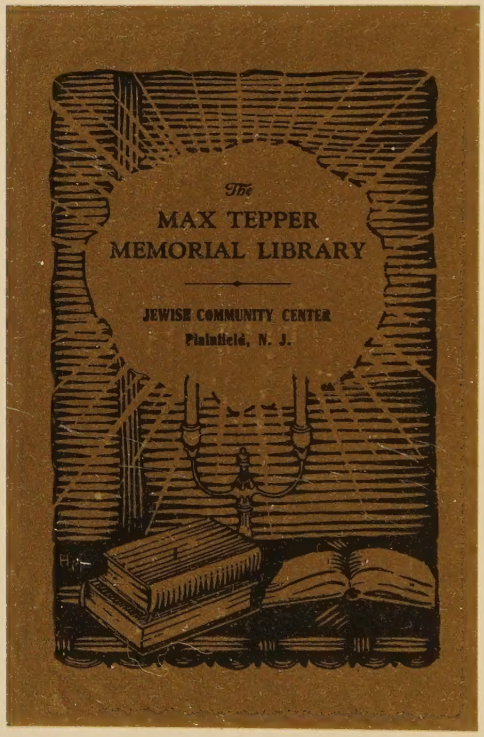

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TWICE-TOLD TALMUD TALES

BY

JACOB S. RAISIN

Author of Sect, Creed and Custom in Judaism,
The Haskalah Movement in Russia, etc.

"I know not of the truth, d'ye see,
[Nor do] I tell the tale as 'twas told to me."

BEHRMAN'S JEWISH BOOK SHOP
NEW YORK
1929

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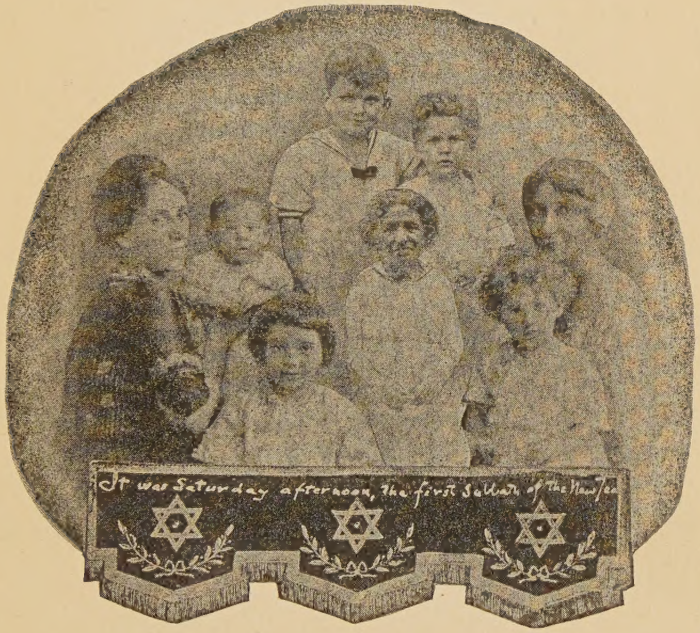
JACOB S. RAISIN


It was Saturday afternoon, the first Sabbath of the New Year

To

Mordenai Lazarus,
Rachel Marla,
and
Aaron Spinoza

For whom, in happy anticipation, these Tales were prepared while they were yet playful little Sprites in the Palace-of-Goof, situated in Araboth, —the highest of the Seven Heavens, this little book is affectionately dedicated

by

Daddy

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FOREWORD

—::—

I chose for the following the title

TWICE-TOLD TALMUD TALES

primarily because their motif and material are strictly Talmudic. But the method of recounting is entirely my own. They are not translations but elaborations. I have selected and rejected, dismembered and connected, as it suited my fancy; and have, not infrequently, injected into one *Maaseh, Saga,* or story, elements which in the original belong to another. I have also utilized favorite Rabbinic expressions, or words and phrases from the Bible, as suggestions for some of my phantasies, even as the Talmudists did for theirs. The Tales, too, are "twice-told" in a literal sense, in that most of them, prior to their present revision and alteration, have already appeared in several Jewish juvenile periodicals.

FOLLY ISLAND, S. C.

Erev Rosh Hashanah, 5689

INTRODUCTION

It was Saturday afternoon, the first Sabbath of the New Year, and from every nook and corner of the house there breathed forth that inexpressible something which infuses in the faithful Jew's heart sweet yet solemn thoughts of lights long fled, of dreams yet to come true. The Rabbi sat at the head of the long, oval table covered with a spotlessly white Sabbath cloth, seemingly deep in the contents of some ancient volume, while now and then indulging in a sip from a steaming glass of tea—he always insisted on his tea being served in a glass—when suddenly the door was flung wide, and half a dozen of his little nieces and nephews, arrayed in their holiday best, threw themselves, one after the other, upon him, and, as if they had rehearsed beforehand, exclaimed in one accord:

"Good Sabbath, Uncle Jack, and may you be inscribed in the Book of Life for a very happy New Year!"

"Good Sabbath, little ones," answered the Rabbi, "and may you, too, and all Israel, and

all mankind, be inscribed in the Book of Life for a very happy New Year. Have you decided on something nice and useful to be done during the coming year?"

"Yes, uncle dear," said little Dassie, who, being the youngest, always appointed herself spokesman for her older brothers and sisters and cousins. "We have decided on something nice and useful, but you will have the doing of it."

"And what may it be, little Dassie?" asked the Rabbi, trying his best to suppress a smile.

"We have decided to come here every Sabbath afternoon, to listen to some of the stories contained in those funny-looking books which you seem so fond of reading."

The Rabbi, or "Uncle Jack" as his nieces and nephews preferred to call him, gazed intently at the glass of tea in front of him, as if seeking information or inspiration in the dull gold of the cheering beverage or the light-brown vapor rising like a miniature cloud above it, and in a voice which sounded especially soft and low on this Sabbath afternoon, said:

"Our Holy Bible commands us 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil'. But since you have decided on my doing something good

and useful I will submit. Henceforth we shall have a story-hour every Sabbath afternoon, till either my stock of stories is exhausted, or you begin to grow tired."

"We will never grow tired," they all chimed in, "until your stock of stories is exhausted."

Strange to say, they never did. And every Sabbath afternoon, during windy autumn and cold winter, in the breezy spring, and even in the hot summer, you might have seen them around the long, oval table covered with a spotlessly white cloth, listening to the Rabbi retelling the Tales once told by the good and great Jewish sages of long ago.

And these are some of the Tales they heard:

TALE THE FIRST

THE SUN AND THE MOON, THE SEA AND THE SAND

TIME there was, O my Best Beloved, when the Moon shone as radiantly as the Sun. The Good Lord Who created everything in pairs, made them exactly alike. Both were of the same size and roundness, both were of the same brightness, and both were placed nearest the Seven Heavens, so that, like dazzling twins, they both shed a glowing warmth and a shining light by day and night from one end of the world to the other.

But after a while the Moon began to mope, and grew ever more sullen and discontented. And one morning when she beheld Brother Sun come out fresh and dazzling from under his canopy at the end of the Seven Heavens, "glad like a strong man to run his course", she turned almost green with envy, and throwing herself before the Throne-of-Glory, she thus began:

"All-Wise Ruler of the Universe! Why didst

Thou create *two* great Lights, both of the same size, both of the same roundness, both of the same radiance, and both near the Seven Heavens? All who behold us take us for twins, or mistake us for one another. Nor can they tell day from night, since both of us shine all the time from one end of the world to the other."

The Holy One, praised-be-He, Who knew what prompted the Moon to ask such a question, heard and answered:

"Thou hast spoken well, O Moon. One great Light at a time is amply sufficient. Henceforth take thou thy place nearest the earth, and shine by night."

He spoke, and lo the Moon commenced to sink lower and lower, her body began to shrink, and her face to become paler and paler, while her breath grew colder and colder, until she became the very reverse of her brother the Sun. And thus she remains to this day, an eternal warning to boys and girls, and grown-ups, too, never to break the commandment: THOU SHALT NOT COVET!

But the Holy One Who is good to all, and Who loves even those whom He chastises, soon took pity on her. "My poor Moon," said He,

"because of thy haughtiness thou hast been humbled. Now that thou art humbled I will again elevate thee. More than the Sun wilt thou serve My children as a sign for their various seasons, and by thee shall they count their years and their months and appoint their days of holy convocations which I will make for them to rejoice and be glad thereon."

The Moon, however, was by no means the worst, or even the first, of the "Things-of-the-Beginning" which thought they knew better than the Holy One, praised-be-He, how to arrange this beautiful world. The waters, being the first of all created things, wished to remain the only created thing for all time to come. What can there be more beautiful, they thought, than a round ball of water? And when the First Day was succeeded by the Second Day and no change in the order of creation was made, they became quite sure that they were intended to be the sole rulers of the Good Lord's world for ever and ever.

But at dawn of the Third Day a Voice was heard, still, but very sweet and very distinct,

saying: "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land be visible."

At this the Waters instinctively started to retreat. But as soon as they recovered from their fear they regretted it and decided, presumptuously enough, to disobey the Good Lord Himself. They would stand on their rights, the "rights" always claimed by first-comers against those who arrive a little later. "No," roared the Sea and the fullness thereof, "we will not yield an inch of our rightful possessions to anybody." And soon they emerged once more from every cleft and every fissure, every cavern and every fountain. And soon the verdant valleys were filled and the mighty mountains were submerged, and the fruitful fields and fascinating forests, in fact, the whole face of the earth was overspread by a bottomless, boundless, surging, seething Sea.

He Who dwelleth in heaven saw it, and smiled. "Silly Waters," said He, "presume not to disobey your Creator's command. I say again 'thus far may ye come, but no farther, and here shall be the boundary where the proudest waves of the Sea shall stop.' "

And suddenly a thick cloud of dust, borne on the wings of a wind from the four corners

of the world, marked off the shores of every continent, every peninsula and every island, as with whitish chalk, and to the amazement of the Waters, try as they would, they could not pass by these tiny particles of sand which stood guard over them on all sides.

Still the proud Waters refused to submit. They did not understand that the Holy One, praised-be-He, intentionally chose the smallest and the weakest things to confound the biggest and the mightiest. They roared and they raged, they fretted and they foamed like a witch's cauldron, and more than once endeavored to escape from their prison-house. But all in vain. The sight of the tiny particles of sand fearlessly standing guard and sticking to each other in a firm resolve to do the will of the Good Lord, filled them with terror, and the Sea fled and the Jordan, not to say the other rivers, turned back.

But once a habit is formed, especially when one is young, it is almost impossible to outgrow it. To this day the Waters continue to roar and rage, to fret and foam, though by this time they should know better. To this day they are never at rest, though all they can do is to cast up mire and dirt, and thus render their escape ever more difficult.

TALE THE SECOND

ANGELS WHO FLEW DOWN AND ANGELS WHO FELL DOWN

IT was the Sixth Day of the making of the Things - of - the - Beginning. The Morning Stars just finished their singing together an enchanting celestial rhapsody, and the various battalions of Ministering Angels, headed by Michael to the right, Gabriel to the left, Ariel to the front and Raphael to the rear of the Throne-of-Glory, now took their turns in lifting up their voices in new songs and hymns of praise, and in dispensing music on various and most cunning instruments made of most precious metals and woods. They praised their Creator for His exceeding greatness, they lauded Him for His abundant goodness, they extolled Him for His wonderful acts. And when every voice was in full cry, and every ram's horn and gold and silver trumpet in full blast, and every stringed harp and clanging cymbal in its loudest and sweetest harmony, loudest and sweetest and most thrilling of all rang out a chorus of six-winged Seraphim:

ANGELS WHO FLEW DOWN AND ANGELS WHO FELL DOWN

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts,
The whole world is full of His glory!"

A moment of intense silence succeeded, when all bowed in adoration toward the Throne-of-Glory. Then the Choir Invisible from behind the Curtain of Seven Clouds was heard, responding:

"Blessed be the Name of His Glorious
Kingdom for ever and ever."

And the Cherubim and the Erelim, and the Divine Beasts, and the still disembodied little Sprites in the Palace-of-Goof, and the mighty mountains and verdant valleys, and the fruitful fields and waving woods, and the Sea and the fullness thereof, all took up the glad refrain, and from one end of the world to the other echoed and re-echoed:

"Blessed be the Name of His Glorious
Kingdom for ever and ever."

While all this was taking place, the Holy One, praised-be-He, sat upon His Throne-of-Glory, which hangs suspended high above the Seventh Heaven. At His right hand stood Justice, at His left Mercy, while Life and Death knelt in front of Him. A curtain of clouds, each of the

seven hues of the rainbow, veiled them from the view of all save the seven Ministering Angels. Some very important occasion must have brought the latter behind the Curtain, when a glorious day began to dawn for the sixth time upon a world still young and fresh and filled with a beauty which no human eye has yet seen.

And so indeed it was. For as soon as the grand and joyous chorus ceased its songs and hymns of praise, and the music of the various Spheres was hushed, the Holy One, praised-be-He, began to speak in a voice so tender that the love-cooing of the turtle-dove is but a very faint reminder of it, and this is what He said: "Sweet is the music and charming are the melodies which ascend to Me from the Lower-Worlds; yet there seems to Me to be something lacking in the harmony and beauty of them. I miss the sound of the human voice in the songs, and the touch of a human hand on the harps and cymbals. What say you, My Ministering Angels, about our making a Man in our own image and according to our likeness?"

At this the innumerable Spheres ceased their motion, the Cherubim and the Erelim and the Holy Beasts and the disembodied little Sprites

in the Palace-of-Goof, dared not resume their celestial music, even the mad white-caps of the restless Sea stopped their noise, and the constantly chattering forests hushed their whispers. All felt that something tremendously important was about to happen, and all were bent on hearing what was being discussed in the council of the Holy One, praised-be-He, behind the Curtain.

And the first Voice they heard was the voice of Truth — they recognized it by its clearness and its slowness, and this is what it said:

"O Lord of Light and Wisdom, will not he whom Thou art to create be too frail to resist Falsehood? Will he not, out of fear or out of hope, deny the signature *Emeth,* which Thou hast engraven on Thy seal-ring? If my words are acceptable in Thy sight please, O Lord, create him not."

The other Voice they heard was that of Mercy, which they recognized at once by its sweetness and lowness, and this is what it said:

"Lord, Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in kindness! Thou hast made so wonderful a world, and hast filled it

with such marvelous things, and Thou hast declared that they were all very good. Yet what avail they unless there be an eye to see them and a mind to appreciate them and a heart to enjoy them. What is the earth with its beautiful plants, its fine animals, tame and wild, its precious treasures both sparkling and strong, to us in the heavens, to us who are ever happy, always singing, ceaselessly singing? Man will need them, and they will need him, and both will be made more useful by coming in contact with each other. Man, too, will need Thee and will give Thee an opportunity which no Angel can, of exercising Thy mercy and lovingkindness. If I found grace in Thy sight, dear Father of All, withhold not Thy hand from creating Man."

Then they heard a Voice which by its ring of calmness and contentment they took for the voice of Peace, though this time it sounded rather excited. It pleaded:

"O Thou, Who makest peace in Thy heavens! Far be it from me to differ from Sister Mercy, but I prefer the opinion of Brother Truth. I fear me that Man, in search of happiness, will destroy Thy wondrously beautiful

handiwork; that he will dig up the smooth surface of the earth, uproot, or cut down, the stately trees of the forests, hunt the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, and alas, enslave and hurt his own brothers and sisters. Thou Who lovest peace, please create him not."

And lastly they heard a somewhat stern yet stately Voice, which after a moment's guessing they agreed to be that of Justice, it asserted:

"Judge of all the World! I have listened to the reasons of all who preceded me, but I prefer those of Sister Mercy. Not that Truth and Peace are altogether wrong. But justice, justice must we pursue at all hazards, and in justice to Thy world, it were best that Thou wouldst create Man. For without an understanding mind and a loving heart Thy world will have been made in vain."

A pause followed, and then again a Voice was heard which filled all who heard it with an awe in which there was nothing of fear. It was the Voice, or rather the *Bath-Qol,* of the Holy One, praised-be-He, passing judgment upon the advice of His Ministering Angels behind the Curtain. And this is what it said:

"You have all spoken well, but I am inclined to the views of Mercy and Justice. In My Holy Torah there will be written 'In righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor'. But Truth and Peace condemned Man ere yet he was formed. My world will be incomplete without a being whose body is that of a beast but whose spirit is that of an angel, who, born in ignorance, can yet attain to the highest wisdom. Nor need you be uneasy, Truth and Peace My beloved children. It may take long before Man will let himself be guided by you, but in the Last-of-Days he will learn to love you as I do, and thou, Truth, wilt reign supreme over all, and thou, Peace, wilt unite those who are far and those that are near in one affectionate family. I say: Let there be Man, and let him be master over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth!"

At this, Mercy and Truth, Peace and Justice embraced and kissed each other, and the Seraphim and Cherubim, the Erelim and the Holy Beasts, the Cycles and the Sephiroth and even more the still disembodied little Sprites in the Palace-of-Goof, burst out in a brand new song. The

ANGELS WHO FLEW DOWN AND ANGELS WHO FELL DOWN

Holy One, praised-be-He, was praised by all His host, praised by all His angels, praised by the Sun and Moon, praised by the Stars-of-Light, praised for having commanded that Man should be created. But more than by all was He praised and thanked by the flowing waters, by the fragrant flowers, by the flying birds and the frolicking beasts for sending them Man with an eye to see, a mind to admire, a heart to love and a hand to caress them.

And amidst this chorus of gladness and gratitude, the figures of Truth and Mercy and Peace were seen shooting down on the glittering rays of the now setting Sun from heaven above to the earth below, preceded by Justice who went on before to show them the way to the future abode of Man.

One Angel there was who soon also left his home in heaven; but it was not, like Truth and Mercy and Justice and Peace, of his own good will, but because he had to. He did not *fly* down, but *fell* down. And when the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Erelim and the Holy Beasts,

the Cycles and the Sephiroth and the still disembodied little Sprites in the Palace-of-Goof, saw him fall they all broke out in bitter weeping. This Angel was Satan, also called Samael, who later came to be known as Evil-Desire and also the Angel-of-Death.

Satan, or Samael, was the chief of a battalion of Angels who continued their opposition to the creation of Man even after the Holy One, praised-be-He, commanded that he should be made. It was not because they feared that he would be false or cruel, as did Truth and Mercy, but rather because they would not brook an earthly being to become a little lower than themselves. So, as soon as Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace, descended to earth Satan threw himself at the foot of the Throne-of-Glory, and, as if choking with grief, exclaimed: "Almighty Ruler of the Universe! Seest Thou not that the mere thought of making Man has already deprived us of those without whom heaven will never be the same? What I am concerned most about is the fate of these Thy holy ones on earth. For Man will never be guided by them. The imagination of his heart will be evil from his youth. He will fill the earth with violence,

and those who seek to be truthful, merciful, just and peaceful will suffer the most. I know Thou wilt repent Thee if ever Thou dost make him."

"Thou needest not be concerned about the fate of my holy ones, Truth and Mercy, Justice and Peace," answered the Good Lord, somewhat displeased. "They may suffer and starve, but never will they remain so for any length of time. Though crushed to earth, they will ever rise again. Neither shouldst thou lose faith in Man. Many of his seed will be sinners, but not a few will also be saints; and even of the sinners some will repent and return unto Me, and make of heaven a still brighter and better place than it is, for 'where the Repentant Ones stand, they who have never sinned cannot stand.' "

"Is it just that he who sinned and repented should be shown greater love than he who had never sinned?" persisted Satan.

"Yes," replied the Holy One, praised-be-He, "for it is harder to be good after one is bad than never to have been bad at all. If thou art in doubt then *try,* and thou shalt see!"

Suddenly the heavens began to shake like a

sheet in a storm. The Sun became overcast with a thick cloud of smoke, the stars looked like glowing coal, forked lightning leaped in all directions, and shattered into splinters the cedars of Lebanon; the earth trembled so that the mountains seemed to skip like rams and the hills like lambs; while a seething and surging Sea sent forth masses of water to the very skies, and its white-caps grinned and growled and raged and overflowed far beyond their sandy barriers.

And to the sound of a deafening thunder, in the lurid light of a zigzaggy shaft of lightning which almost laid bare the foundations of the earth, the denizens of heaven saw Satan and his battalion falling, *falling,* FALLING, from heaven on high into the nethermost pit of the earth below. . . .

TALE THE THIRD

RED-EARTH AND MOTHER-OF-ALL-LIVING

MAN, whom the Holy One, praised-be-He, decided to make, was to be a masterpiece. He was to be a *Little World* in himself, a being who combined every trait of every creature, and could choose to act like the lowest beast or the holiest Angel. Moreover, he was to be able to make himself at home everywhere, in the cold North, in the warm South, in the East as well as in the West. But lest he become proud, and regard himself as God, he was to be formed of no better material than common clay, and lest he be overbearing toward the rest of his fellow-creatures the Holy One, praised-be-He, purposely put off making him till the last hour of the Sixth Day, after He had finished all His other work, so that the smallest insect might remind him: "I was on this earth long before thee!"

So, after the heaven and the earth, and all they contain were completed, heaps of dust

began to move from the four corners of the world: frozen, snow-covered dust from near the North Pole, soft, black dust, from near the Equator, brownish dust from the East and yellowish dust from the West. Noiselessly and orderly they moved toward the centre of the universe, where was later to rise the City-of-Peace, or, as it is better known by its Hebrew name, Jerusalem; and on the spot where there was to stand the House-of-Prayer-for-All-Peoples, they stopped and piled themselves one on the top of the other in a huge, shapeless mass.

Then something happened. The shapeless mass began to stir. Some of the dust turned into bones. This was soon overspread with other dust which became flesh. This, in turn, was immediately covered with still other dust which looked exactly like skin, and, encasing them all like a glittering coat of mail, was a substance similar to the nails on our fingers and toes. And lo, on the ground lay an immense human figure, resembling, in every way, you and me, save that instead of hands he had only mits.

But something still more wonderful came to pass. From the four corners of the world there

was borne upon the wings of a gentle breeze a beautiful *Spirit,* and, the moment it touched the nostrils of the immense human figure he took a deep breath, opened wide his eyes, and stood erect upon his feet!

Tall was he, and exceedingly handsome; so tall that when he stretched himself the Sun hung like a medallion below his neck, so handsome that even his heels shone brighter than the splendor of the Sun. Indeed, it was all Gabriel the Angel could do to suppress his own desire and that of his battalion of singing Angels from worshipping Man and adoring him with the celestial hymn: "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts."

Never did the Holy One, praised-be-He, so rejoice in the work of His hands; never was He so happy as at the sight of this his latest and greatest masterpiece. And calling together all the hosts of heaven, he pointed at Man and exclaimed:

"See, how tall he is! See, how handsome he is! But tall as he is and handsome as he is, he is yet more wondrously wise, and also extremely humble."

"Let us examine him," said the Angels with one accord.

"Do so," smilingly consented the Holy One, praised-be-He. "But remember it is not proper to ask questions the answer to which you already know." And at His nod all living beings, two by two, male and female, began to pass in a long procession before them.

"Who of you will call them by their names, or tell me something about their nature?" asked He.

The Angels confessed they didn't know.

"Then ask Man." And to their surprise Man told them all about their nature, and gave to each being the name that suited him best.

"And what dost thou call thyself?" asked they, expecting him no doubt to give himself some very imposing name followed by some high-sounding title, such as "The Magnificent", "The Illustrious", "The Unsurpassed", and so forth.

"My name," was his unassuming reply in Hebrew (the first language spoken by Man, and the only language which, to this day, Angels understand), "My name is *Adam* (Red-Earth), for out of the *Adamah* (Red Mother Earth) was I taken."

The Angels admitted that wondrously tall and handsome as Red-Earth was, he was yet more wondrously wise as well as exceedingly humble, and together with the beasts and cattle, the creeping things and winged birds, they praised the Name of the Lord Whose glory will henceforth be manifested on earth as well as in heaven.

No sooner did the Angels wing their way to their heavenly home, than Red-Earth became restless and sad. The sight of all the living beings, passing in a long line before him, two by two, male and female, made him feel ill at ease. He felt that something was missing, though as yet he knew not what.

To cheer himself, he sought the company of the various creatures that flew above his head, or frolicked and gamboled round about him in the hope of being petted and caressed. He played with lions and lambs, with eagles and doves, tigers and rabbits, vultures and nightingales, and many more of the furred and feathered animals, who then formed one loving and lovable family. He was amused by the cunning

stunts and clever saws of the Serpent, who at that time was one of the most beautiful beasts, and walked on two legs. He was especially delighted with the company of a little Faerie, whom, because of her long black tresses in which she loved to stick the brightest flowers, he fondly nicknamed Lilith, or Spirit-of-the-Night. And yet he was not wholly happy. Something was lacking, though as yet he knew not what.

Sad and tired he stretched himself out on the ground, and as he lay there it began to dawn upon him that the reason why he was not wholly happy was because he had no companion. The birds and the beasts were beautiful to look at, and delightful to play with, but they were so different. Even Lilith was more of a Spirit-being than a human being, and there was something about her which made him afraid of her. Strange, he thought, that the Holy One, praised-be-He, who gave to each of His creatures a companion after its kind, should have overlooked him.

Of course, the Holy One, praised-be-He, had not overlooked him. He only wanted to keep him waiting a little, that he might wish the

harder, and be the happier when his wish was granted. But Red-Earth who knew it not began to pray: "Father in Heaven! to every bird and beast and creeping and swimming thing Thou hast given a companion. Wilt not Thou give me, even me also, a companion like unto myself?"

It was the first prayer ever uttered by Man, and it was a prayer for some one to love and be loved by.

No sooner did he finish his little prayer than something strange seemed to him to take place within and around him. Dimmer and dimmer grew the objects in front of him; more and more distant and ever less distinct sounded the voices, and heavier and deeper became his breathing. He began to wonder what it all meant, but before he could give himself a reason for it, his eyes closed and he fell into a sound sleep.

For the Holy One, praised-be-He, Who heareth every sincere prayer, wished to prepare for him a most pleasant surprise. He was to give Red-Earth a companion like unto himself, and, what is more, *taken out of himself!* The only difficulty was to determine from which

part of him she was to be taken. If from his head, would she not be more clever than kind? If from his eyes or ears, would she not be too curious to see or to hear? If from his tongue, would she not talk too much? If from his hands, would she not play too much, and if from his feet, would she not be too much of a gad-about? No, the best part to make her from is from one of the ribs, the thirteenth, which sheltered his heart. Red-Earth had so many of them that he would never know the difference.

He said, and He did. And when Red-Earth awoke, ah, what a companion there stood in front of him! The most brilliant stars that glittered in the sky became pale and lusterless before one gaze of her eye; the softest furs of the prettiest beasts appeared to him rough and hard compared to one touch of her hand; the sweetest melodies of the most charming singing birds sounded dull and harsh at the whisper of her voice. "Such a beautiful being," thought he, "must have an equally beautiful name. Let's see! By right I ought to call her Woman, for I know that she was not like myself made out of the earth, but taken from *me,* Man; yet, *I* will

call her Eve," which, translated into English, means Mother-of-All-Living.

It was the first real love Red-Earth experienced, and it was not long ere he led Mother-of-All-Living under the *Huppah,* or marriage canopy, the like of which "no eye hath seen". The finest gems and the most precious jewels and the most exquisite ornaments which ever adorned a royal princess would appear insignificant by the side of those which studded its ceiling, gleamed from its four posts, and blazoned on its floor. For it was fashioned by the Great Architect Himself. And thither the Bridal Couple went to the sound of celestial songs dispensed by the Choir Invisible, the blast of the silver trumpets, the beating of timbrels and the clanging of cymbals and the strumming of golden harps by the overjoyed Angels. And while the heavens rejoiced and the earth was glad, the Sea and the fullness thereof roared, and the fields decorated themselves with their most gorgeous flowers, the Holy One, praised-be-He, Himself gave the Bride away; and the Holy One, praised-be-He, Himself pronounced the blessing over the bowed heads of the first and handsomest bridal couple

that ever was. And when the ceremony was over, an honor-guard of the prettiest and playfullest little Sprites, who came over from Araboth specially for the occasion, escorted them to the Garden-of-Paradise where they hoped to live happily forever after. . . .

TALE THE FOURTH

MOTHER-OF-ALL-LIVING AND SOME OF HER PETS

VERY many, and very marvelous, O my Best Beloved, were the pets with whom Mother-of-All-Living passed her time in her beautiful bower in the Garden-of-Paradise. Were I to attempt to tell you about all of them the Sabbath Day would be spent, and the Habdalah-Torch would flicker in the candlestick's socket, and I would still be far from finishing. I could mention, for instance, those peculiar beings which, at one and the same time, resemble men and every other creature, which Anah saw while he was taking care of his father's asses in the wilderness of Zibon, and the Wood-Grouse which guards over the Shamir at the mere touch of which the hardest flint splits in two, which King Solomon employed in hewing the rocks for the Temple of Mount Zion. Then there was the Tahash whose color matches whatever he comes in contact with, and whose hide Moses, our Teacher, preferred as a covering for

Mother-of-All-Living, & some of her Pets

the Tabernacle; the Salamander who is produced by burning a myrtle branch for seven years, and whose blood, if smeared over a body, renders it proof against the piercing arrow, the stabbing sword or the scorching fire — the mother of King Hezekiah besmeared her son with it prior to his being thrown by cruel Manasseh into the flaming jaws of Moloch; the Barnacle-Goose which grows on trees and which even when his beak is still attached to the branch, can repel with his wings and claws any beast or bird that dares attack him, and the Unicorn with a single horn emerging from between his eyes and looking exactly like a hat-rack, which Red-Man chose as his first sacrifice. I will, however, tell you of a few, the strangest and strongest of any that anyone has ever known or seen.

Among the chief delights of Mother-of-All-Living was Renanim, or "Ziz", as she preferred to call him. It was to the sound of his melodious and joyous voice which to her seemed "sweeter than honey and the honey-comb", that she went to sleep at night and awoke from her slumbers in the morning. But singing was not his only accomplishment. Many another

bird could do the same. He served Mother-of-All-Living also in the capacity of a live parasol or fan! Whenever the midday sun became too hot, or the evening wind too sultry, Renanim had but to stretch out or wave his huge but beautiful wings, and the sun would cease to scorch and the sultry wind would cool.

The only one who was privileged to get a glimpse of this remarkable creature was the famous traveler Rabbah-bar-bar-Hanah. Once while on a distant journey, he noticed on the far-off horizon a thing that looked like a bird of tremendous size, whose feet were washed by the waves and whose head was hid in the clouds. He was attracted by the unusual sight, and craving a much needed bath, our intrepid seafarer started to steer his bark in its direction, with the intention of leaping into the water which seemed no higher than the Bird's ankles. Fortunately, just in the nick of time, he heard a most melodious voice calling out from beyond the clouds:

"O thou traveler bold,
Presume not herein to leap;
Though the Sea seem shallow—hold,
More than it seems is it deep.

Full seven years are now passed
Since an ax herein was dropped,
And though 'tis sinking steady and fast
At the bottom it has not yet stopped!"

They say that Rananim is so wrapped up in his singing that he never bothers with his eggs or his nest. It therefore sometimes happens that one of the eggs falls out of the nest, and do you know what follows? Three hundred States are crushed by the yolk and sixty more States are washed away by its white!

But especially fond was Mother-of-All-Living of Behemoth, or R'em, who needed a thousand mountains to supply him grass for a single meal, and who could easily have drained the Jordan at one gulp. Fortunately, she watered him from the never-failing Yubal Brook which gushes through the Garden-of-Paradise. How huge he must have grown when he was fully mature we can realize from a description of him given by Rabbah-bar-bar-Hanah who saw one on one of his numerous trips. Rabbah-bar-bar-

Hanah reports *his* Behemoth as high as Mount Tabor, which is four miles; his neck was three miles long, his head was a mile and a half, and his horns were an hundred ells. And yet he was merely a Baby Behemoth, just one day old!

Indeed, Mother-of-All-Living's Behemoth was so big that the whole world could not contain more than two like him at one and the same time. And so the Holy One, praised-be-He, *had* to ordain that the father should die before the Behemoths, who always come in twins, are born, and that their mother should die soon after they are born. He also ordained that the twins, who are always a male and a female, should never be long together. So, no sooner are they born than the male Behemoth leaves for the extreme East and the female Behemoth for the extreme West. Thus they journey for twenty years in opposite directions, lead a solitary life for fifty years, then resume their twenty years' journey homeward, only to meet, bring forth a couple of little Behemoths, and. . . die!

With one such Baby Behemoth King David had an experience which very nearly cost him his life. One day, while he was still a shepherd

lad, he noticed a mountain where he was sure there was no mountain before. So he took up his staff, and started to climb up and explore it as far as what appeared to him like two tremendous trunks of trees. All at once the supposed mountain started to rise, and David found himself lifted ever nearer the Sun, until his hair began to scorch. David, realizing that the mountain was nothing else than a young Behemoth awaking from his nap, and horrified at the thought of having to spend twenty years of his life on a mere journey to the extreme East or West, began to pray. "O my God," he called in his anguish, "if Thou wilt deliver me from the R'em I will build in Thy honor a Temple as high as the horns which I mistook for two tree-trunks." At this a Lion made his appearance and, of course, the R'em made obeisance as every well-mannered animal would, to the King of Beasts. This gave nimble-witted David the opportunity to slide down, only to be confronted by the fierce looks of the ravenous Lion. But the future King of Israel, never losing faith in the Holy One, praised be-He, who is an ever-present Help in the time of need, began to pray

again. "Save me, O Lord," said he, "from the mouth of the Lion, even as Thou didst answer me from the horns of the R'em." And, strange to tell, the Lion licked his lips, waved his tail, and gracefully walked away. This experience David never forgot. About it he composed one of his prettiest Psalms. And from the day he became king he began to prepare all the material for the building of a Temple to the glory of God which should be a "house of worship for all people" and in front of which should stand two pillars in the shape of tree-trunks. These, Solomon, his son, named Jachin and Boaz.

Sometimes, when the water was calm and clear, Mother-of-All-Living would go far out into the deepest depth of the Sea, in order to get a good look at the She-Leviathan whom the Holy One, praised-be-He, had soaked and preserved in the ocean's brine on the day of her creation because she, too, like Behemoth on earth, was too large for the world to hold her and her mate together. But the most thrilling sight of all was Leviathan himself. With his fins glittering like burnished gold, his scales

as sharp as tempered steel, his eyes blindingly bright, she would gaze at him for hours as he lay in the Waters Above, coiled around the wide, wide world, holding fast in his mouth the end of his tail. She knew that if he should ever let go of his tail, even for a moment, the waters above the firmament would rush to unite with the waters below the firmament. And Mother-of-All-Living wondered: Suppose he gets tired, and *lets go,* what will become of her beautiful bower and precious pets in the Garden-of-Paradise?

Of course it was out of the question for Mother-of-All-Living to play with *him.* Even she would hardly dare to pet and play with a creature of his size. But there were Little Leviathans aplenty to amuse her whenever she was in the humor to divert herself with the fish of the Sea. We can form an idea of how they looked from the one seen by Rabbah-bar-bar-Hanah. After a weary voyage when he and his crack crew of sailors almost despaired of ever reaching home, his experienced eye discerned something like a huge Island floating in the Sea. His joyous cry "Land! Land!" inspired his men

with new hope. Sails were hoisted aloft, every hand grasped an oar, and a favorable wind soon brought them to the safe-looking harbor. There they anchored their vessel, and, as soon as they landed, started to build a fire in order to cook a meal and rest from their fatigue. When, to their consternation, they felt that the part of the Island on which they landed was perceptibly sinking below the surface of the water.

"An earthquake, an earthquake!" shouted the frightened sailors as they rushed for the shore, and made as fast as they could for their anchored boat.

"Not at all," answered the much experienced Rabbi. "Look well and you will see the other end of the Island rising at the same time that our end of it is sinking, and two streams of water gushing forth out of it as if to put out the fire. What we assumed to be an Island was nothing else than a mud covered Leviathan. Yet small as he is when measured by the standard of the real Leviathan, he is by no means a midget. Were he to sail slowly against the current and we with the rapidity of an arrow down the current, it would yet require three days and three nights for our vessel to

traverse from one of his fins to the other."

Another, or, who knows but it was the same, Little Leviathan was once sighted by Rabbi Jochanan who was caught in a very dense fog on a moonless night, with the waves rising sky high all around his frail boat. It was while the passengers were praying each to his god, and the Rabbi, of course, to *his* God, that there pierced through the intense darkness two great lights, like two dazzling Suns, the rays whereof kept on shining until they reached a haven of safety. It continued until they landed at the landing place, when two big streams, as big as any in Syria, gushed forth in front of them, and everything disappeared in fog and darkness once more. On being asked what this peculiar phenomenon could be, the wise Rabbi replied: "This was no other than a little Leviathan. The two lights, like two dazzling Suns, were his eyes; and the two streams, as big as any in Syria, the water which he exhales through his nostrils. The Holy One, praised-be-He, who harkened to our sincere prayers, not only calmed the rough Sea, but as a special mark of His favor, granted us a vision of what the real

Leviathan, with whom He loveth to play three hours every day, whose every gulp leaves a gap in the Sea which it takes seven years to refill, and by whom the fish deem it a privilege to be swallowed alive, looks like. Verily, great are Thy works, O Lord, in wisdom hast Thou made them all!"

Yet, you will be mistaken if you think that Mother-of-All-Living loved nothing but monsters of the air, of the earth or of the waters underneath the earth. No; sometimes she preferred little pets, such as the tiny dog-fish, or Kalbith, as Red-Earth used to call him. It delighted her especially to see the Leviathans shrink in fear of him, and through him she first learned the lesson that the Holy One, praised-be-He, chooses the smallest and the weakest things to confound the biggest and the strongest things. For never did a Leviathan engage in battle with a Kalbith, but the latter came out victorious. Such a duel between the monster and the midget of the watery world was once witnessed by Rabbah-bar-bar-Hanah, and it ended in the Leviathan's death. Yet even this Leviathan was by no means of the smallest variety. For when the Sea, which has a horror of dead bodies, spewed

him out on the shore, as many as sixty provinces were crushed by his carcass, the population of sixty other provinces had a plentiful supply of fish-meat for seven months, and there still remained enough of him to be salted and preserved for seven months more. In addition thereto, they drew from each of his eyes three hundred barrels of oil for lighting purposes! The following year, when our traveling Rabbi visited them again, he found that the inhabitants of the provinces which were destroyed had rebuilt their homes from the scraped bones of the Leviathan whom little Kalbith had killed.

Such, O my Best Beloved, were some of the pets with whom Mother-of-All-Living spent many a sunshiny hour in the long, long ago, when our world was still full of surprises. The Holy One, praised-be-He, purposely made most of them tremendously huge to suit the size of Red-Earth and his bride who themselves were so tall that the deepest depth of the Sea reached only to their ankles, and the highest height of the sky came far below their necks. They shrank

only after their disobedience, and their seed continued to grow ever more stunted to this day. Yet, those of us who do what is right will be raised again, and attain the human stature of old. This will happen in the Last-of-Days, when the righteous will celebrate the final arrival of the era of endless peace and good-will to all. Those who have controlled their appetites will be treated to a most sumptuous repast. The first dish at the banquet will be a piece of stuffed Rananim. This will be followed with a generous portion of the She-Leviathan which was soaked and preserved in the Ocean's brine since the Six-Days-of-Beginning. But the most appetizing and dainty dish of all will be slices of Behemoth and Leviathan, after they will have fought their last battle in the sight of the Saints.

Ha, what a duel that will be between the king of all the beasts of the forests and the monarch of all the fish of the Sea; what a splintering of horns, a smashing of scales, a trampling of hoofs and a flapping of fins! It will begin by Leviathan first routing a battalion of Angels whose fiery spears and flaming arrows he will shake off as easily as if they were made of rotten wood and soft stubble. Then will he turn against the

Beast. Long and bitter will be the battle; the Sea will seethe like a witch's caldron, the highest hills will shake and tremble. But in the end both will succumb. Leviathan will be slain by a stroke of Behemoth's powerful tail, Behemoth will be slaughtered by a gash of Leviathan's razor-like fins. Then will commence the Great Feast, for which all arrangements will have been made by the Angels. From the skins of the two monsters canopies will be constructed for the Saints, each of whom will be seated under a *Huppah* commanding a superb view of three hundred and ten worlds. From their flesh portions will be served to the Saints, each of whom will be seated according to his merit. What will remain of the skins will be spread like tapestries over the homes in Jerusalem, which will make them shine from one end of the earth to the other; and what will be left of the flesh will be distributed among the less deserving of all nations. Nor will there be lack of wine, of wine which was kept in the celestial cellars since the Six-Days-of-Beginning, and which no human eye has ever seen or tasted since Red-Earth and Mother-of-All-Living were

driven out of the Garden-of-Paradise; nor of music, the music which no human ear has ever heard since the Morning-Stars sang together, and all the Children-of-God shouted for joy.

The only one who will not participate in the Great Feast, or *S'udah,* as the Saints prefer to call it, will be Satan, *alias* Samael, *alias* Evil-Desire, also known as Angel-of-Death and sometimes even as the "Primeval Serpent". For with the mutual killing of Leviathan and Behemoth, the Killer, too, will at last be killed by the Holy One, praised-be-He, Himself, and his sovereignty over all the living will then finally come to an end. Thenceforth the Throne which Satan vacated in his envy of Man will be occupied by Red-Earth who will come to life again; sickness and grief will be known no more; the Holy One, praised-be-He, will wipe off the tears from all faces; peace and good-will will at last be inaugurated among all creatures, and for all time to come:

> *"Gladness and joy will be the order of the day,*
> *And all sorrow and sighing will flee away."*

TALE THE FIFTH

WHY THE SERPENT LOST HIS LIMBS AND ALL

IN those far-off days, O my Best Beloved, when Red-Earth and Mother-of-All-Living were spending their honeymoon in the Garden-of-Paradise, the Serpent was by no means the long, live sausage, with little to break the monotony of his form, that he is today. At that time he, too, like you and I, enjoyed all the conveniences that make one's body "up-to-date". He had arms to swing on either side of him, legs to run with, and he was not only able to walk, but he could *talk,* and sing, and laugh, and his skin was as smooth to the touch and as pleasant to the sight as yours and mine. He was also quite tall, even when measured by the standard of those times; taller, indeed, than the tallest camel, and so strong that he could do the work of all the other animals combined, and so subtly wise that he knew all the secret places where gold and silver and gems were stored away for the crowns and robes and *Huppahs* of the Saints.

The trouble with the Serpent was that he *knew* he was wise and good to look at, and so he became inordinately conceited, and, like Samael among the Angels, began to develop a very mean and very rude disposition. He stood upright, but he was not *upright* in the best sense of the word. He was the only disagreeable creature among all the lovely, cunning and kindly animals who dwelt together in the beautiful Garden-of-Paradise. He was unbearably haughty, awfully lazy, and was very ill mannered. He would gobble down all the wine and milk and fruit and sweetmeats before anybody had a chance to taste them. He took great delight in perpetrating cruel pranks on some unsuspecting fellow-creatures, and then put the blame on others. Worst of all, he was an incorrigible liar and, like all liars, he believed nobody else,—not even the Holy One, Himself, praised-be-He.

Of course he had few, if any, friends. The only one in the Garden-of-Paradise who became somewhat attached to him was the Cat, for she, too, had a high opinion of herself, and preferred to walk alone rather than to be seen in the company of those—and they were by far the

majority — whom she regarded as inferior to herself by birth or station. But even to her the Serpent was not always kind, and frequently, when she started to purr and rub against his legs, he would push her unceremoniously aside with a "Hiss!" and a "Scat!" and, poor Miss Cat, scared and humiliated, would hurry away to moan and meow to herself the remainder of the day.

The only one whom even the Serpent could not resist was Mother-of-All-Living. Her he loved as whole-heartedly as he was able. For her he would even work, or make shift to do so. To please her he would wait for his wine, milk, fruit or sweetmeats, till it was his turn. With her he would spend all the spare moments she was willing to give him. Indeed, he loved her so that he began to think, and to think, and to think how he might rid her of Red-Earth and then have her all to himself. Conceited as he was, he was sure that once her husband was out of the way, she would have none but him alone.

And when he heard the Lord God command Red-Earth not to eat of the Tree-of-Knowing-Good-and-Evil he betook himself at once to

contrive some scheme to make him disobey.

One day Lazy Serpent was basking in the sun, and watching Mother-of-All-Living pick flowers which she was putting in her hair. Finding that Red-Earth was nowhere to be seen, he politely approached her and addressed her in his gentlest manner:

"O Mother-of-All-Living, is it true that the Lord God commanded you not to eat of *every* tree of the Garden?"

"No," answered she, "we may eat of every tree, except of the one which is in the midst of the Garden. That we must not even touch, for the moment we touch it we shall surely die. So my husband told me and *he* ought to know."

"Hi, hi," chuckled the Serpent, "yes, your husband ought to know!" And before Mother-of-All-Living could guess what he was up to, he pushed her—quite unintentionally, of course, — against the Tree-of-Knowing-Good-and-Evil, at the same time mumbling under his breath: "For the moment we touch it we shall surely die — for the moment we touch it we shall surely die!"

Surprised at his behavior, and terror-struck at the probable consequence of what she thought was a mortal sin, Mother-of-All-Living quickly withdrew from the magic tree. At this the Serpent laughed aloud, and in a make-believe fright he asked:

"Aren't you dead yet? Your husband ought to know!"

Ashamed and exasperated, Mother-of-All-Living did not know what to do or say, while the wily Serpent continued:

"I say, Mother-of-All-Living, with all due respect for your husband's wonderful wisdom, this is sheer nonsense. As you did not die from the touch neither will you die from the bite. The real reason why the Lord God commanded Red-Earth not to eat of the Tree-of-Knowing-Good-and-Evil is that He was afraid lest by eating of it you will become as wise as He."

Still Mother-of-All-Living did not stir. So the wily Serpent tried another mode of reasoning:

"On second thought I believe, O Mother-of-All-Living, Red-Earth was right. The touch of the Tree means certain, even if not in-

stantaneous death. Your doom henceforth is sealed; nothing can save you any more! Soon, very soon, you will be laid away in the deep, deep ground. And then? — Hi, hi! Did you ever hear of charming little Lilith, the Gypsy Queen of the lovely Spirits of the night, who now reigns in Zemargad and is the proud mother of Ahriman?"

"No," answered Mother - of - All - Living, somewhat aroused. "I never heard of a mother except in name, and that's myself."

"Well," said the Serpent, "this is something you should have known even without eating of the magic Tree. Red-Earth should have told you about devilish little Lilith, long ago. With her two fiery eyes and seven jet-black tresses—no wonder he found her irresistible! But she was not of the sort that believed that 'her husband ought to know'; she had a mind of her own; she would rather be deprived of a thousand children a day than of a single pleasure a year. But once you, her only rival, is removed, Red-Earth will meekly submit, the two will be reunited, and poor Mother-of-All-Living will be a thing of the past, or be remembered only to be laughed at for her simplicity."

This was more than Mother-of-All-Living could stand. Fear and envy drove her almost to distraction. No, devilish little Lilith must never become the mistress of the beautiful Garden-of-Paradise! And before she knew what she did she grabbed the magic fruit held out to her by the wily Serpent who, in his gluttony and lack of manners, so far forgot himself as to first take a bite thereof himself.

Still, something within her kept her from taking the fatal bite. No, she would first feed the animals, as she was wont to do, and let them enjoy it too. So she called around her all the pretty birds of the air, all the lovely beasts of the field, all the big and little fishes of the water under the surface of the earth. First came the Cat, who like her friend the Serpent had very poor manners and was quite gluttonous. Then came the Dog, not because he was so greedy but because he always responded to the instant call of his affectionate mistress. The Cow and the Camel, the graceful Horse and the stately Deer followed next, and all the rest came after, flying, or running, or swimming. Then she threw some of the fruit in the air and

the pretty-plumed birds ate thereof. She scattered some of the fruit on the ground and the lovely animals of the land ate thereof. She cast some of the fruit upon the water and the big and little fishes ate thereof. Yes, all of them ate, all of them enjoyed it and asked for more, to the great delight of the wily Serpent, for they knew not what they did.

Did I say *all?* Well, this is hardly true. There was an exception, though only one, but it was neither Renanim of the air, nor Behemoth of the thousand hills, nor Leviathan who encircles the waters above the earth. It was no other than the wee, little Hol, tiniest of feathery creatures and most timid of them all. She alone was brave enough to resist temptation, and to obey the command of the Holy One, praised-be-He, in spite of the temptation of Mother-of-All-Living. That is why little Hol alone was saved from the doom of death. What is more, she does not even grow very old. Whenever at the end of a thousand years, she begins to feel somewhat feeble with age, she sets her nest on fire, permits herself to burn to a crisp till nothing is left of her save the size of a little egg, and young and fresh she begins her growth into

mature Hol-hood for a thousand years to come.

"Will this magic fruit never, never end?" Mother-of-All-Living wondered, for she noticed that much of it still remained, and that the more of it she gave and the more of it they ate, the larger it seemed to grow! Perhaps the spell would be broken only if she, too, ate of it. So she bit at the rind, and she bit at the meat, and before she was aware of it she swallowed rind, meat, and all.

Suddenly everything and everybody about her seemed to change. The Sun grew dark; the trees began to rustle and sigh; the Cat meowed the Dog barked, the Cow mooed, the Horse neighed, and screeches and moans and howls and groans filled the air. Mother-of-All-Living felt herself shrinking, shrinking, shrinking until she was no bigger than one hundred ells, and when she turned in the direction of the Tree-of-Knowing-Good-and-Evil, she beheld, instead of the wily Serpent, the Angel-of-Death with a drawn sword in his hand, sneering with his lipless mouth which extended from ear to ear, and leering with a thousand, thousand eyes with which his body was covered from the sole of

his foot to the crown of his head.

Red-Earth, then, did know what he was talking about, and she would surely die, and he would marry devilish little Lilith who would thus become the mistress of the beautiful Garden-of-Paradise! The thought almost drove her to distraction. No, this must never be. So she picked up what still remained of the magic fruit, rushed to where Red-Earth was, and told him what she had done. And, even as she expected, in his love for her he ate of it, too, so that if she died he also would die.

All this the Holy One, praised-be-He, saw, saw and was greatly aggrieved. "Foolish, foolish children," thought He, "to disobey Me in a little thing like *that*. Well, it was their first offense." He would forgive them this time. Let them but ask His pardon, repent and promise to disobey no more. He would even be the first to make the move and give them a chance to become reconciled to Him. So, without the least trace of anger He asked Red-Earth: "Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?"

Instead of grasping the opportunity thus offered him to apologize, Red-Earth only

moped, and sulkily replied: "The woman Thou madest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree, and I did eat."

This was the worst he could have done. It was not a bit nice of him to speak in the tone and manner he did. It was worse not to acknowledge his disobedience, and not to apologize for it. But it was real mean to turn tell-tale on her for whom he prayed so ardently and by whom he was loved so devotedly. Yet, O my Best Beloved, such is ever the way of transgressors. "One sin drags in another", as our Sages say. We first disobey, and do what we shouldn't do; then we blame one we shouldn't blame. Still, the Holy One, praised-be-He, Who even in His anger remembers mercy, did not punish him as He threatened. Red-Earth did die on the day whereon he ate of the Tree. But it was a *Day-of-God* which is measured neither by sunrise nor by sunset, but by a full thousand of human years. True, he lived only nine hundred and thirty years; but this was due to his generosity after he repented. For when he read in the Book-of-Creation that David, the future King of Israel, was doomed

to die the moment he was born, he cheerfully donated seventy years of his own, so that the world might not be deprived of its greatest of rulers and sweetest of sacred poets.

The wily Serpent, however, fared much worse. And it served him right; for to tempt the innocent, and to mislead the unwary, is the greatest sin of all. Him the Holy One, praised-be-He, would give no chance; with him He refused to argue. Of him he made an object lesson for all the tale-bearers and all the eves-droppers. He condemned the Serpent to crawl upon his stomach, and to taste nothing but earth, no matter what he ate.

And immediately myriads of Angels swooped down upon him, and, despite his shrieks which could be heard from one end of the earth to the other, at once executed the divine command. First they slit his tongue, the tongue with which he induced Mother-of-All-Living to disobey, so that he could utter only a hiss. Next they chopped off his hands, so that he could no more touch; and then they lopped off his legs, so that he could no longer walk. Finally,

stripped of his smooth and creamy skin, he was put into a tough, tight, striped jacket, and ordered to move on to the first hole that he would meet on his way.

Thus from being the handsomest, the wily Serpent became the ugliest of all his fellow-creatures, and from being the straightest he became the crookedest. But, in spite of his punishment, he did not change his disposition. He looked different from without, but remained the same within. To this day he is still fond of wine, and milk, and fruit, and honey, and sweetmeats, though it tastes to him merely like dust; he still haunts the secret places where gold and silver and gems are stored away for the crowns and robes and canopies of the Saints; he is still awfully lazy, and so unbearably haughty that he sheds his tight, tough and striped jacket at least once a year and puts on a new one, though to do so gives him insufferable pain. He even decorates himself with rattles to attract the attention of passers-by. Above all he is extremely mean, and is ever ready to poison the children of Mother-of-All-Living because she did not prefer his company to that of Red-Earth.

The only place where he never hurt anyone was Jerusalem, when the sacred House-of-the-Lord was still standing on the top of Mount Zion; and the only one against whom he bears no grudge is the Cat, which is perhaps the reason why she is so proud, and always prefers to walk alone.

Yet, because the Serpent never complained of his lot, the Holy One, praised-be-He, Who, in His mercy, rewards for whatever is good even in the worst of us, conferred a distinguished honor upon him. He made him, who was the first cause of disobedience, rudeness and death, serve as a sign of devotion, gentleness and life. When the Children-of-Israel so far forgot themselves as to complain of the Manna, the magic food which contained in it the taste of whatever one wished to eat, Moses, our Teacher, caused a brazen Serpent to be put on a high post, to remind them of their fellow-creature to whom everything tastes of dust and who yet never complains, so that the Children-of-Israel who looked at it, would think of it, be sorry, repent and thus be forgiven by the Holy One, praised-be-He, Who "is good to all, and Whose tender mercies are over all His works."

TALE THE SIXTH

THE MOUSE, THE CAT AND THE DOG

IN the Garden-of-Paradise, O my Best Beloved, the only law all knew and practised was the great Law of Love. No one destroyed anything, no one harmed anybody; every one loved his neighbor as himself. As it will be again in the Last-of-Days, so was it then. The Wolf dwelt with the Sheep, the Leopard lay down with the Kid, the Calf and the young Lion, and the chubby little Cub of a Bear played together the livelong day. Vultures and Doves, Hawks and Hens, Cats and Mice, Sharks and Shrimps, all the myriad beasts of the field, the fowls of the heaven, and the creeping things on the ground and the swimming things in the water, formed one big, loving family. Some of them may have been somewhat mischievous. An Eagle would sometimes pounce upon a swift-running Hare, and raise him by his ears high above the tallest of trees, or a Whale would shut his gaping mouth

when a shoal of fishes swam unawares into it. But it was only for the fun of it, or, more likely, the Eagle wanted to give the little Hare a bird's-eye view of the outside world, and the Whale wished to show the fish the wonderful machinery which the Holy One, praised-be-He, put on a smaller scale in each of them. Of course, they all fed upon nothing else than grass and flowers, and drank only of the clear and cool water of the Yubal and the Jordan.

Especially chummy were the Mouse, the Cat and the Dog who dwelt in the same house with Mother-of-All-Living. The Mouse, because it was tiny, lived in a nice little hole under the floor; the Cat, who was much bigger, stayed on the floor above; and the Dog, the biggest of them, lodged in a pretty kennel outside. They were almost always seen together at play, and whatever they were given to eat they would divide share and share alike.

But all this changed the moment they tasted of the magic fruit of the Tree-of-Knowing-Good-and-Evil, and were driven out of the Garden-of-Paradise. Feeling began to rise high among some of them. The staunchest friends began to disagree. And, strange to say, among

the very first to disturb the peace of the place was that "wee, sleekit, cow'rin', timorous beastie"—Miss Mouse.

Now, the Mouse was very fond of the Dog, for she found him honest, and faithful and true. But her suspicion was aroused against the Cat, because she was haughty and gluttonous, and was constantly prying into all nooks and corners of the house, even at night, for she could see in the dark as well as in the light.

So, one day, Miss Mouse appeared before the Holy One, praised-be-He. She lifted up her forepaws, and, stretching out her tail to its full length began to pray:

"O, Lord God. Times are getting harder and harder, and with my growing family I am beginning to worry about the future. Thou hast made too many in Thy world who are so much alike that they can well be spared. There is the Tiger, and there is the Cat. Both have the same velvety furs, the same graceful tails, the same fiery eyes. Why have both of them in a world which will soon be overcrowded with some of us. Make the Tiger who is bigger and handsomer devour the Cat who is smaller and more gluttonous."

"Mouse, Mouse," answered the Holy One, praised-be-He, "what thou wouldst have Me do unto the Cat I will have her do unto thee."

Frightened at the unexpected answer, the Mouse commenced to plead: "O, Father of Mercy, wilt Thou deprive Thy world of so useful a creature as I am? Will not my children some day punish the Egyptians, and the Philistines, and the Assyrians, for being cruel to Thy Chosen People?"

"Do not worry about My Chosen People," replied the Holy One, praised-be-He. "A sufficient number of thy children will always remain, no matter how hard the Cat will try to destroy them."

Dissatisfied with this reply, Miss Mouse decided to do of her own accord what the Holy One, praised-be-He, refused to do for her, and forthwith proceeded to wage a battle with the Cat. She bit her with her saw-like teeth, she scratched her with her very sharp nails, and she struck her with her long round tail. But the Cat only stared at her with her fiery eyes, and grinned at her with her bewhiskered lips, and, after letting Mouse exhaust all her strength, she turned on her and devoured her.

On seeing what happened, the little Mice were terrified, and rushed to Mother-of-All-Living, and begged her to help them against the Cat, and to let them live with her again as did their mother in the Garden-of-Paradise.

"Of course," answered the kindly lady, "I certainly will be nice to my friend's orphaned children. If you will promise never to make a noise, and to eat nothing but the crumbs that I brush off my table, you may stay with me as your mother did in the Garden-of-Paradise."

"Thank you," said the little Mice, and off they scoured to look for holes wherein to make their homes. But though they kept their promise not to make a noise, they soon forgot their promise to eat nothing but the crumbs which were brushed off the table. They even began to steal from larder and pantry, and, worse yet, one of them nibbled a hole in their mistress's best and only dress, the dress she sewed together from the leaves of the Fig Tree, and which she prized so much because of its association with the hours she spent in the beautiful Garden-of-Paradise.

Henceforth Mother-of-All-Living could not stand the sight of the little Mice any more. From

pets she began to regard them as pests, and instead of "Mice", which she would rhyme with "nice", she called them "Rodents". She even sought an opportunity to rid the house of the thievish and inappreciative little guests who in return for her kindness ruined her best and only dress.

And an opportunity presented itself not very many days thereafter.

For some time after the expulsion from the Garden-of-Paradise, the Cat and the Dog continued to play together as before, and to divide their food share and share alike. But times grew harder and harder, and once they had to do without food for three days at a stretch. Too lazy to work, the Cat began to mope, and meow, and complain. She spurned his companionship and told him that she didn't want to see him ever, ever again. And, without as much as saying "Good-bye" to him, she started to run and run until she reached the house where lived Red-Earth and Mother-of-All-Living his wife.

"Mother-of-All-Living," she purred, "I have had nothing to eat for three days, won't you please let me live with you again as I did when we were in the Garden-of-Paradise?"

"Of course," answered the kindly lady. "I never go back on my old friends. If you promise to drive out the Rodents who gnawed a hole in my best and only dress, you may stay with me again as you did in the Garden-of-Paradise."

"Thank you," meowed the Cat, and off she rushed to search for the holes wherein the little Mice made their homes.

Poor Dog! The little Mice now had holes, and the lazy Cat a home, but he, the most honest and faithful of all, had nowhere to go. So he ran and ran, and as he ran he happened to pass a cave wherein lived a Wolf.

"Brother Wolf, brother Wolf," whined the way-worn Dog, glad to meet an old relative of his, "I am tired and hungry, and have nowhere to go."

"Well," growled the Wolf, "I barely have enough for myself, and times are getting harder

and harder. But if you promise to help me in my work you may make my cave your home."

"I promise," said the unsuspecting Dog, and stretching himself out on the ground he fell soundly asleep.

Hardly was the moon on half its journey over the sky than the Dog was aroused by the sound of a howling and a prowling, and, jumping out of the cave, he saw his host with a pack of Wolves making ready for a chase. True to his promise he joined them too, and before long he found himself in the presence of several frightened Sheep. For a moment he stood still, undecided what to do. But when he saw one of them killed by his ravenous host, his blood boiled in him, and at the risk of his life he attacked the whole pack, and did not stop till the Sheep were safe in the sheepfold.

Hungry and tired the Dog was about to stretch himself on the ground for a much needed rest, when he suddenly heard the familiar voices of Red-Earth and Mother-of-All-Living who were drawn to the place by the baying of the Wolves.

"O friend of our friends and foe of our foes,"

said they to the astonished Dog, "we have been most anxious to see thee ever since we had to leave the Garden-of-Paradise. We love thee dearly, we need thee badly, and thou must not think of ever leaving us again."

At this the Dog wagged his tail and barked his thanks, and resolved ever to protect them and all that belonged to them with life and limb. And they gave him of their bread and he ate, and they poured out for him of their milk and he drank, and all of them lived as happily together as when they were still in the Garden-of-Paradise.

"When the Morning-Stars sang to-gether,
And all the Children-of-God shouted for joy!"

TALE THE SEVENTH

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF THE ANGEL-OF-DEATH

FOR a long, long time, O my Best Beloved, the Angel-of-Death, who was made on the first of the Six-Days-of-Beginning, dwelt in the Dominion-of-Darkness, which borders on the Kingdom-of-Chaos. He had no duties to perform, no work to keep him busy, nor any companions. In solitude and silence he sat and thought, and watched and waited, and sometimes wondered what, after all, was *he* created for? His only diversion was an occasional excursion into the Realm-of-Light, but though the Holy One, praised-be-He, caused His countenance to shine upon him as on the rest, and even told him once that he, too, was "very good", he did not feel as if he *belonged* there. It always seemed to him that the other Angels dimmed their lights at his approach, and that there was a touch of sadness in their sweet hymns the moment they saw him.

To break the monotony of his existence, he

began to visit another place. It was the Valley-of-Hinnom, where the Fallen Angels made their headquarters, and where his arrival was always the occasion of great glee. They felt greatly flattered to receive a call from one who was still admitted into the Realm-of-Light, and did their best to make his stay among them as pleasant as possible. In his honor they would invite Lady Lilith, with her four hundred and eighty troops of hideous *Shedim;* Iggereth-bath-Mahlath, and her seventy-eight dancing demons; and vampire-like Aluqah, accompanied by her two daughters whose every hair is a snake and whose only words are "Hav! Hav!" Ashmedai, too, would bring along his company of *Lezim,* without whom there could be no real fun, and a host of goat-like *S'irim,* besides many *Malakhe Habbalah,* or "Destructive Imps", some of whom delight to spread plagues in the dark, and some of whom love to mislead the unwary in broad daylight; some of whom inhabit unoccupied houses, or moan in deserts wild, and some of whom prefer to do mischief in milling crowds or unclean places; some of whom are as big as the Tower-of-Babel, and some of whom are so small that ten thousand of them

would dance on the finger tips of one who forgot to wash his hands as soon as he woke up from his sleep. There would also be no lack of prospective Ghosts, and Goblins, and *Gilgulim,* some of whom wore shreds of their future earthly bodies in a manner to provoke the howling laughter of all who noticed them. All of them came, and all of them shrieked, and groaned, and moaned, and growled, and gnashed their teeth, and grimaced, and distorted their bodies, and played cruel pranks on one another, in the dreary grayness which hemmed them in, to make merry and entertain their distinguished guest, the *Malakh Hammaveth,* as they called him in Hebrew to show they regarded him still as an Angel.

True, the Angel-of-Death did not at first relish their sense of humor, and many a time he resolved never to visit them again. But he thought it his duty to return their party calls, and the oftener he mingled with them the more he became accustomed to them, and gradually grew even to like them and to enjoy their stunts. Ere long he came to resemble them to such an extent that he could not be distinguished

from Satan, Samael, Evil-Desire, or even an ordinary common Demon, and his visits to the Realm-of-Light became fewer and further apart.

It was on one of those rare visits that the Angel-of-Death was attracted by an Unusual Halo, brighter than any he had ever seen, just underneath the Throne-of-Glory.

"What may it be, pray?" he asked of an Angel standing near by.

"It is the reflection of the face of him who will make the Lower-World a better place to live in for all of the Children of the Holy One, praised-be-He," replied the Angel.

"And may I see him?"

"Thou mayest, if thou canst." And saying this the Angel started to lead him to where he might obtain a better view.

"Stop!" cried the Angel-of-Death, after they flew a few flaps. "Please, stop! I do not think I can behold the face of him who, as thou sayest, is to make the Lower-World a better place to live in. I am already half blinded by His brightness, and I feel my strength ebbing away." And back he flew to his Dominion-of-Darkness.

Since then his distemper increased a million-fold, and his visits to the Realm-of-Light almost ceased altogether.

But once, as he sat in his Dominion-of-Darkness wrapped in his gloomy thoughts, he heard a Voice, sad and slow, issuing from the Realm - of - Light, calling: *"Malakh Hammaveth"!*

"Here I am," was his immediate reply, as with one swoop he flew through the gate and prostrated himself before the Throne-of-Glory.

"Malakh Hammaveth," repeated the Voice, "when thou wert first created I had hoped thou wouldst have to wait for thy task much longer. Alas, thou art to enter upon thy duties much sooner than I expected. The Wily Serpent, prompted by Satan, caused Red-Earth and Mother-of-All-Living to disobey. They sinned, and are to receive the wages of sin, which is death. Here is thy Commission. Enter thou on thy career which will end only with the Last-of-Days.

"Behold, I make thee lord over nine hundred and three roads, all of which lead to the grave. Henceforth thou wilt have dominion over the

birds in the air, the beasts on the earth, and the beings that swarm in the water underneath the earth. Man, even Man, shall not escape thee. His council, his wisdom, his understanding shall prove of no avail. His mighty ones shall be nought, his famous ones as though they had never been, his sages as if without sense, when their allotted time draws nigh. Yes, all that have breath in their nostrils are thine; some sooner, others later, but none can avoid thee forever. On tiny babes at their mothers' breasts, on youths and maidens full of the joy of life, on hoary heads steeped in the lore of ages; in torrid Summer, or frigid Winter, when Spring bedecketh the earth with a mantle of flowers, or Autumn-leaves cover it with a gloomy pall, thou thy duty must perform and do as thou art bid."

At this the Hosts of Heaven shuddered. The Seraphim and Cherubim, the Erelim and the Holy Beasts, the Cycles and the Sephiroth, ceased their music, and when the Angel-of-Death rose he looked and lo, dimmed was the Unusual Halo, just underneath the Throne-of-Glory, and the faces of Mercy and Peace were bathed in tears.

"O, Lord of Lovingkindness," he heard them plead, "wilt Thou give Malakh Hammaveth the power to destroy the righteous as well as the wicked?"

"By no means, My darling daughters," replied the Voice. "Though I have made him lord of all living, his power will not prevail against the good and the pure. These, after their death shall be more alive than while they were still on earth. Neither will he have dominion over those who, having sinned, repent and return unto Me in sincerity and truth; for I do not desire the death of the sinner but that he return unto Me and live. Neither, also, will he be allowed to do aught without special permission. For in My ever-open Memorial-Book every Man will write a record of his deeds, and on every Rosh Hashanah a balance will be struck, and on every Yom Kippur the Contents will of themselves proclaim who shall live and who shall die; who shall perish by water, and who by fire; who by the sword, and who by a beast; who of hunger, and who of thirst; who through an earthquake, and who through a plague; who from a rope, and who from a

stone. Yet, even then, I will still wait till Hoshanah Rabbah, nay till his last day, and from him who has repented, and prayed for forgiveness, and gave to the poor and needy, I will avert My evil decree."

Mercy and Peace smiled through their tears, and knowing how seldom the Holy One, praised-be-He, refuses their petitions, they made bold to plead again:

"O, Lord of Lovingkindness! Thou Whose righteousness is like the mighty mountains, do not, we pray Thee, make Thy judgments like the great deep. Help Thou those who cannot help themselves."

"Most assuredly I will," replied the Voice. "While I do not interfere with one who does what is wrong, I readily extend a helping hand to him who endeavors to do what is right. Whoever seeks Me, is sure to find Me. Even if he opens unto me but the size of a hole of a needle, I will open unto him the entire gate of heaven. No one will die while he is occupied in the study of My Torah, or in the performance of My commandments. I will also have My Shekhinah stand at the head of him who is dying, and soothe the departing Spirit. And

whenever the *Kaddish* is recited in memory of a dear departed one, I will hear it, and ease the sufferer in the Valley-of-Hinnom; and whatever good will be said or done in the name of the deceased will cause him to come closer and closer to the Garden-of-Paradise, thence to be admitted into My Family-on-High, and round about My Throne-of-Glory."

The Voice ceased, and everything in the Realm-of-Light at once changed again. The four battalions of Erelim were the first to resume their interrupted music, and were joined by the Morning-Stars who sang together and the Choir Invisible of the Sons-of-God who shouted for joy. The six-winged Seraphim, the baby-faced Cherubim and the Holy Beasts soon took up the tune, until from the four quarters of the world there arose one grand refrain:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts;
The whole earth is full of His Glory."

At which the Cycles, and Sephiroth, and even the still unembodied little Sprites in the Palace-of-Goof bowed in adoration and exclaimed:

"Blessed be the Name of His Glorious Kingdom for ever and ever!"

And to the inexplicable horror of the Angel-of-Death, it seemed to him that the Unusual Halo was more radiant than ever just underneath the Throne-of-Glory.

Grabbing his Commission in one hand, and the Insignia of his office—consisting of a two-edged sword, a curved knife and a vial of gall, in the other, Malakh Hammaveth flapped his twelve enormous wings in the direction of his vast Dominion-of-Darkness. But there he could find no rest. Something was gnawing, gnawing, gnawing at his heart. So he decided to seek diversion among his friends in the Valley-of-Hinnom.

Long and loud, blood-curdling and hair-raising, were the shrieks, the groans, and moans, and howls, and growls which welcomed him as soon as he arrived. And when they noticed his Insignia, pandemonium broke loose, and all the Malakhe Habbale, or Imps-of-Destruction, went wild with joy. The cursing, yelling,

gnashing, malevolent Shedim and S'irim, and Lezim, and prospective Gilgulim and Dibbuqim at once betook themselves to filing their teeth, sharpening their claws or talons, trying out their horns, or practising most frightening grimaces. Finally they all repaired to the Ford-of-Yabboq, ignited a huge heap of sulphur, the lurid tongue and finger-like flames of which reached out in all directions, and the smell of which made the atmosphere suffocating. And when the whole world looked as red as blood, and the heat became as intense as that of a furnace, and the air was filled with the stench of myriads of carcasses, Lilith and Aluqah, Ashmedai and Samael ascended their improvised thrones, and at a signal from Iggereth-bath-Mahlath, the host of the Malakhe Habbale, the Shedim and S'irim, the Lezim and prospective Gilgulim and Dibbuqim and hobgoblins, clasped hands, stamped their feet, and lost themselves in a maddening whirl of dancing.

The reddish light, the putrid smell, the deafening noise and the wild dance, produced a singular effect on the Angel-of-Death. His

strength which began to ebb away at the sight of the Unusual Halo came back to him. It pleased him to be honored for his Commission, and to be envied for his Insignia—so unlike *There,* where they hardly greeted him and mostly treated him as if he were an intruder. "What good does all their refinement, and gentleness, and quiet happiness do *me?*" he asked himself. "Here I am Somebody; there, Nobody. 'Better the head of a Fox, than the tail of a Lion', as the Sages will some-day say. Yes, I will show the denizens of the Valley-of-Hinnom that their confidence in me is not misplaced, and those Shining-Ones *There* that I, too, am not unimportant. I'll begin with Man himself, and see what will become of the Unusual Halo, just underneath the Throne-of-Glory."

Yet, though he felt much stronger, he was no longer as strong as formerly. He had to make *eight* swoops before he could find a resting place for the soles of his feet. Finally he alighted on a cluster of stately-looking almond-trees, amid which he knew to be hid the huts of good and kindly men. "This," said he to himself, "is an ideal spot to open up my headquarters

in the Lower-World. From here I shall enter upon my duties."

But ere his foot could touch the ground he heard a Bath-Qol from beyond the clouds calling out:

"O thou with Seraph's wings and Satan's face,
On this soil presume not to tread;
Thou canst not make here thine abiding place,
For thy breath hath the smell of the Dead!"

"And who gave thee the right
Not to let me alight,
Me, who reigns o'er all:
The birds in the air,
The beasts everywhere,
The fishes both big and small?"

angrily and mockingly queried the Angel-of-Death. To which the Bath-Qol replied:

"Who made the dark, and created the light,
He bade me thee entrance refuse,
And halt thee from thy speedy flight
If to descend here thou shouldst choose.

Senacherib's arms shall here not avail,
Nebuchadnezzar's hosts will be of no use;
For here is the site of the shrine of Beth-El,
And of the deathless City of Luz!"

Disappointed in his first attempt to gain a foothold in the Lower-World, the Angel-of-Death furiously flapped his twelve enormous wings and flew to where he heard the charming melody of a bird, chirping to her mate on a branch above their nest.

"Small beginnings, big endings," said he to himself, as he drew his arrow from its quiver. "I'll commence with birds, and finish with Man himself. Besides, birds fly nearest to heaven, and are therefore closer to those haughty ones in the Realm-of-Light." But just as he began to adjust his arrow on his big bow, which was to pierce the breast of the chirping little bird, he heard a Bath-Qol from beyond the clouds calling out again:

"O thou with Seraph's wings and Satan's face,
By envy be not misled;

This is neither the being, the time nor place,
To start recruits for the dead."

"And who gave thee permission
To make intercession
With me who reigns o'er all:
The birds in the air,
The beasts everywhere,
The fishes both big and small?"

angrily and mockingly queried the Angel-of-Death. To which the Bath-Qol made reply:

"Who dwelleth on high and also below,
He bade me guard little Hol;
And shield her from thy cruel bow,
And from the gloomy Sheol.
For she alone, though weak and small,
Refused to eat of the Tree;
And tho' begged and threatened by Mother-of-All,
Would not disobedient be."

And to the bewilderment of the Angel-of-Death, a multitude of Cherubim with flaming swords, which turned every way, appeared as if from Nowhere, formed a guard of honor around the little Hol and her mate, and flew with her to the eastern gate of the Garden-of-

Paradise, which flung open at their approach, stayed open till they passed through, and slammed with a bang just as the Angel-of-Death was on the point of entering it too.

But Angels and Demons never give up. Neither did Malakh Hammaveth, who became a combination of both. Baffled again, he flapped once more his twelve enormous wings and flew, and flew, undecided where to stop, or what to do. At last it dawned on him to try his luck with the beasts of the field. "This time I am bound to succeed," said he to himself. "They are so far from the Realm-of-Light as hardly to be noticed by those haughty ones up there. Besides, was not the Wily Serpent, the cause of all this unpleasantness and aggravation, one of them? It will serve them right. Yet, since I must keep my arrows for the birds, and my sword and knife and vial of gall for the humans, the only means left for me is to drown them. That's right. These rascals are unworthy of the honor of being done to death by the Insignia of my exalted office. They shall be drowned, the whole lot of them, in the deep, murky Sea."

And with one mighty swoop, he alighted among a crowd of the representatives of every beast of the field who were deliberating on an important matter which concerned their future welfare.

It happened to be on the self-same day when the Lion, in accordance with an ancient custom, abdicates his throne, and the Fox is crowned King over all the beasts of the field. The Representatives of all the various species were sitting in a circle, drinking in the words of wisdom which dropped like dew from the lips of the wisest of them all. Suddenly Representative Dog, usually the most docile and attentive of the group, began to howl as he never did before, and soon there followed a sniffing and a snorting, a yelling and a yelping, a neighing and a braying. Even though they could not see him, they all felt the presence of the Angel-of-Death stalking in their midst, felt the carrion smell of his breath, felt the sneer on his lipless mouth, which extended from ear to ear, felt the leer of each of his thousand thousand eyes which dotted his body from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head, and stricken with irrepressible terror they all broke out in a headlong stampede, ran

amuck in the direction of the dark, murky Sea, and plunged into the bottomless abyss.

Elated with his success, the Angel-of-Death turned to Mashbir, his lieutenant and armor-bearer, and proudly wanted to know how he liked it for a beginning.

"Exceedingly well, your gloomy Majesty!" rejoined the other. "But I think those rapscallions rather enjoy their watery grave, for they appear to be more frisky now than they were while still on solid earth."

And so indeed they were. For Rahab, "the monarch of the main," ever on the alert to extend his sway, quickly made them throw off their earthly impediments, dressed them up in the liveries which best suited his own subjects, and turned them into denizens of his boundless and bottomless Domain-of-the-Deep.

"Frisky or not," answered the Angel-of-Death somewhat indignantly, "I have performed my duty. Let proud Rahab put on whatever finishing touches please him best. Some day his turn will come, too; though it is yet a long way off. But halt! it seems one of those four-footed fools escaped us after all!"

Immediately they flew to where they saw a beast of the field strolling leisurely by the sea shore.

"Who art thou?" asked both of them in one breath.

"I am Master Fox on all the other days of the year; but today I am His Majesty the King."

"And where are thy subjects?"

"They went to wage war with the hosts of Leviathan."

"And shouldst thou not, as King, have gone at the head of thy army?"

"I would not deprive the Lion of the honor due him as King of the beasts of the field the whole year round."

"Then why didst thou not go to fight in the ranks?"

"It would ill become me to be a buck private who am today an anointed King."

"Thou art as clever a traitor as ever lived," said the Angel-of-Death, and grabbing the poor animal by the tail, he was about to plunge him in the deep, murky Sea there to join the rest of his tribe.

"Hold on," implored the Fox, "even if thou art the Angel-of-Death thou surely wilt not snuff out a fellow's life before his time. I was only joking when I said that today I am His Majesty the King. It was not me but my brother whom the beasts of the field chose as their King for today, and he, noble prince that he was, led them in battle against the hosts of Leviathan."

"And how do I know that thou art telling me the truth?" asked the Angel-of-Death, recalling that he had blundered once or twice before.

"If thou doubtest me, just look in the water and see! Ah, my poor, poor brother, how he wiggles with his legs spread out toward me as if imploring me to come to his rescue." And the cunning Fox burst out into bitter tears.

It was yet before the Angel-of-Death became the hardened being which his disagreeable duties have made of him in the course of time, or ere he had been so often deprived of his prey by Man's marvelous discoveries in medicine. And so, impressed by the Fox's eloquence, and greatly affected by his bitter tears, he was ready to yield. To make sure, however, that he was

not being misled, he looked in the deep, murky Sea, and seeing there the exact likeness of the animal he held by its tail, he tenderly carried his intended victim back to the shore, begged his pardon for annoying him before his time had come, and thanked him for preventing him from making a mistake. Then, satisfied that his job was finished, and finished as thoroughly as an Angel should, he and Mashbir his armor-bearer wearily winged their way back into the vast Dominion-of-Darkness.

Happy in his unexpected escape from the hands of the Angel-of-Death, the Fox made haste to spread the news, and to boast of his shrewdness. And the first he met was the Cat who was absent from the deliberations of the representatives of every beast of the field because she thought it below her dignity to be there.

"Hello, Master Renard," mewed she, "what in the world art thou doing here. Malakh Hammaveth, I understand, is seeking to make thy acquaintance."

"Is he, really? Well, the pleasure is all his." And the Fox laughed till tears came streaming down his cheeks. "My, but he is easy," he con-

tinued, "and yet I heard it said that no one can see his face and live."

"And didst thou, indeed see him, and yet art alive?"

"Perhaps I am dead without knowing it. But whatever you don't know doesn't hurt you; so I am as good as alive, am I not? I doubt if thou wouldst not have rushed with those foolish beasts the moment they felt his presence, though they did not see him. But the Fox is always discreet. He would not run with the multitude. Discretion is the better part of valor. This is his motto, and another, which is similar to it, and which also they will some day print in children's books is: He who fights and runs away, will live to fight another day. Well, to make a long story short, I not only didn't die as they did, when I didn't see him, but I am still very much alive even after I saw him."

"But how didst thou do it?" implored the Cat.

"Wilt thou promise not to tell?"

"Crook my little toe, and may the Mice eat me if I do."

"Since thou takest this solemn oath, I'll tell thee. I'd much rather live a few days in my

comfortable cave with pretty Mrs. Fox than spend all eternity with his finny Majesty Rahab, Monarch-of-the-Main, and his scaly Highness Leviathan, Prince-of-the-Deep, I assure you." And having delivered himself of many a wise saw, he finally told her how he fooled the Angel-of-Death by making him believe that the reflection in the deep, murky Sea was in reality the original Fox who was chosen ruler over the beasts of the field for that day.

"Which goes to show," moralized Miss Cat, as she shut her eyes, "that the best of us are likely to make mistakes, and that not only a Cat but even an Angel will sometimes forget." And having thus shown the Fox that he is not the only wise one in the world, she humped up her back and walked away all by herself.

Now, as the Angel-of-Death and his armor-bearer were almost within reach of the Dominion-of-Darkness, he noticed once more something that from a distance looked like a beast of the field, and though quite tired and eager for a well-deserved rest, he was determined

to do his duty as thoroughly as any Angel should. He therefore swooped down again, caught hold of the Cat by her tail, and was on the point of plunging her into the deep, murky Sea.

"One moment, please," meowed the terrified Cat. "I have something important to tell thee."

"Go on," said the Angel-of-Death, endeavoring to maintain an Angelic politeness to ladies. "Go on, but be brief. I have no time to waste on Cats."

"Pray tell me, art thou commanded to drown more than one of a kind!"

"No, not at this time."

"I thought so," said Miss Cat with evident satisfaction. "Now, I do not mind joining my dear sister, mine only sister, who has gone before me into the Domain-of-the-Deep. But I am astonished indeed to find Malakh Hammaveth, an Angel, as forgetful as we ordinary, everyday Cats. Just look in the water and see, please."

The Angel-of-Death looked into the deep, murky Sea; and seeing there the exact likeness of the animal he held by the tail, he was ready to let her go, beg her pardon for annoying her,

and thank her for preventing him from making a mistake. Unfortunately, Mashbir intervened. "Your Majesty," said he, "there seem to be altogether too many twin-brothers and sisters among the beasts of the field. Let me first tuck her under my wing, and then look again for her twin-sister in the Sea."

But no sooner was the poor Cat tucked away under Mashbir's mighty wing than the supposed Cat in the Sea disappeared as if by magic.

"So that's that!" exclaimed shrewd Mashbir. "Rahab, the proud, wants to show that he has everything in his watery domain that is shown him from the world outside. The Cat we saw was only an imitation of the one we showed him; and I fear me this was true also of the Fox. Well, we'll attend to Master Renard a little later. Let us first be through with Miss Cat."

A loud, mournful meow, a splash, a few ever-widening circles, and the Cat was no more. And elated with their discovery, and confident that the Fox's turn would come next, the Angel-of-Death and Mashbir his armor-bearer finally found themselves again in their vast Dominion-of-Darkness.

At the end of the year Leviathan, whose Domain-of-the-Deep became more populated than any other region of the universe, commanded all his subjects to pass in review before him. There emerged a numberless, silent multitude, from deep hollows and narrow ravines, from caves and caverns, from gorges and canyons, from rocky fissures and coral reefs; and forth they swam all over the watery ways, from the North and from the South, from the East and from the West, in shoals and schools, in packs and flocks, some of them native born, others still bearing the marks of their outlandish (or may I say "landish"?) birth, but now dressed up in the livery of Leviathan, Prince-of-the-Sea, and trying their best to look and to act as if they and their ancestors knew no other element all the days of their lives. In long rows they swam all over the watery ways, flapping their tails, waving their fins, brandishing their scales, to pass in review before Leviathan, the viceroy of Rahab, whose power and dominion was now second only to those of the Angel-of-Death.

But when the review was over Leviathan appeared to be displeased, and his eyes which

out-dazzle the sun were dimmed with sorrow.

"O Mighty Leviathan," ventured the Whale, who because of the hugeness of his mouth and the thickness of his skin was always chosen by his fellow-fish to act as their spokesman. "Wherefore art thou sad, and wherefore are thine eyes, which out-dazzle the sun, dimmed with sorrow? Dost thou suspect any of thy subjects of disloyalty?"

"I suspect no one of disloyalty," answered Leviathan. "But it irks me to find that there is still a beast of the field on land the like of which we lack in our Domain-of-the-Deep."

"Is it the Fox?" asked the Seal, who happened to be ashore at the time the Angel-of-Death was fooled.

"Yes," sighed Leviathan, and the billows began to boil like a witches' cauldron. "Yes, the Fox. Nor will I ever be happy as long as there lives a single creature in the air above or the earth below who does not pay homage to me and my Master Rahab."

Whereupon the denizens of the Domain-of-the-Deep called a mass-meeting, and after much

deliberation they appointed a Committee of Sharks, in whose wisdom they had the utmost confidence, and these with the Seal as a guide and the Sea-Lion as an expert on land animals set out to accomplish their mission. After swimming many leagues they reached their destination, and it was not long before they noticed a beast of the field in a pretty fur coat, strolling leisurely by the sea-shore.

"Who art thou?" asked the Sea-Lion, and started to crawl on the silvery stretch of sand.

"Who am I?" repeated the beast, "I am Master Renard; for shortness called Fox, because Mother-of-All-Living said I looked exactly like myself. But pray, who art thou? Thou seemest neither fish nor flesh, with a head that suggests a Lion and a tail that reminds me of a Hippopotamus. I wonder what Mother-of-All-Living would call thee?" and he sniffed, and grinned. "I guess she would call thee 'Fish' for thou smellest and lookest like thyself, ha, ha!"

"So I do, and so I am," blubbered the Sea-Lion, to the great satisfaction of the Seal who moved his lips as if to say "So I do, and so I am!"

"And wherefore am I thus honored with your visit?"

"O thou who art wiser than all the beasts of the field," began one of the most eloquent of the Sharks, "His Majesty, Leviathan, hath heard of thy wisdom, and at his command we are come to invite thee to be his counsellor. But this is only for the present. Greater honors may be showered upon thee in the future. For His Majesty, as no doubt thou knowest, is wifeless and will die childless, and thou mayest yet some day succeed him to the throne of the Domain-of-the-Deep. Come thou then with us, O Master Renard, and all that thou wilt ask shall be granted thee, and all that thou wilt command shall be obeyed, and the fattest and best of us will deem it an honor to be devoured by thee, even as when we are devoured by His Majesty Leviathan."

Clever as he was, the flattery and the favor proved too strong for the Fox to resist. "Such an opportunity," he mused, "I dare not neglect. It may not present itself again. Here, on land, I will ever be doomed to labor and toil. I will continually have to roam from place to place in search of a scanty livelihood, and no sooner

will I obtain a mere mouthful than along will come a Lion, a Bear, or a Leopard—those insatiable parasites who have less sense than the shortest hair in my tail—and snatch it away from my very teeth. They make me a Prince one day a year, but all the other days of the year they treat me worse than a Pauper, and show but little regard for my virtue and wisdom. All I am asked to do is to don the livery of Leviathan, and the most delicious sea-food will be at my disposal. So, good-bye you stupid landlubbers, you will miss the cunning Fox after he is with you no more."

Thereupon he jumped nimbly upon the broad back of a big Whale which the Committee kept in readiness underneath the water, and soon he was carried further and further away from the shore and down into the boundless expanse of the weltering Sea. As he watched the fishes big and small disporting themselves round about him, he thought they were already come to do him homage; as he filled his empty stomach with as many of the fattest and best of them, he believed they were really happy in thus being honored. Finally he stretched himself out with all the dignity that is becoming the coun-

sellor and heir-apparent of His Majesty Leviathan, and fell soundly asleep.

When he awoke, it was cold and damp, and things did not seem as rosy and cheerful as before. Why should Leviathan all at once be in need of a counsellor, and will Leviathan ever, ever die? he asked himself. "Alas," moaned he, "I have been entrapped, and what I have done in haste I will rue at leisure. I cannot expect even to be pitied. Whoever will hear of it will laugh at me: How hath the cunning Fox become the dupe of the foolish Fish!"

At last he thought of a ruse which, he hoped, would save him from his predicament.

"Hello, friend Fish," cried he. "Tell me something about His Majesty Leviathan's way of living. I wish to know all I can about him, in order to be able to be of greatest service to him!"

"Fox, Fox," gurgled the Sea-Lion, "when I was still a four-footed fur-clothed animal like thou, I heard it said thou wert the wisest of all the beasts of the field. I wonder if the Serpent would have thus been so easily duped by the stupid Fish. Just look at me, and see what will

become of thee. Thou, too, wilt soon become neither fish nor flesh, unless His Majesty, on seeing thee, will so like thee as to taste thee. But be consoled. He has better dishes than thy carcass to feed upon. He merely wants thy *heart*, the seat of thy world-famous wisdom, so that by eating it he may, as he thinks, become as wise as thou. What would not all the populace of the Domain-of-the-Deep give to be thus honored by His Watery Majesty!"

"I appreciate the honor more than I can tell thee," replied the Fox. "But I wish I knew it before I departed; for, alas, in my great haste I forgot to take my heart along with me."

"Didst thou, indeed?" asked all in consternation.

"I swear to goodness I did. We Foxes prize our hearts more than our most valuable possessions, and never take them along with us on our strolls for fear someone might steal them or we might lose them in a fray."

"If that is so," declared the Committee of Sharks, "we may as well have a taste of fox-flesh ourselves, for we, being already sufficiently wise need not his heart of wisdom." And to the horror of the Fox a dozen or more huge Sharks

rose as if by magic from the deep, murky Sea, and with mouths agape were about to sink their two rows of sword-like teeth into his quivering flesh.

"Halt!" called the Fox with all his might. "Can you imagine the terrible consequences of your deed? His Majesty will surely think that you have eaten my heart so as to surpass him in wisdom. Just carry me back to the shore, and by my sacred tail I swear I will fetch my heart and return with you to His Majesty. He will then have what he wants, my heart, for the honor of which I am truly grateful, and you will have what you want, the rest of me, which I will resign to you with pleasure."

The idea found favor with the Seal and the Sea-Lion, and most of the younger Sharks, and despite the protest of a Baracuda, the Whale was ordered to turn about and land the Fox safely at the shore.

But the Fox did not wait for the Seal to tow him in. Hardly did he find himself within swimming distance, than off he jumped from the broad back of his live raft, and rushed to a place of safety as fast as his legs would carry

him. Then he started to howl and to whine, and to make faces at the foolish Fish who stared, and stared, and stared.

"Well, we are waiting," called the Seal, who ventured out on dry land. "Please hurry and fetch thy heart."

"Fetch thy heart, fetch thy heart," mocked the Fox. "Thinkest thou I am as silly as all that? No, Siree. I fooled the Angel-of-Death, I fooled Mashbir his armor-bearer, I fooled the haughty Cat, and I fooled thee! My heart is too valuable to offer even His Fishy Majesty, Mr. Leviathan. Ha, ha, ha!" And he laughed so loud and so long that all the beasts of the field came running to see what was the matter.

"But didst thou not swear by thy sacred tail?" screamed the Seal at the top of his voice.

"So I did, so I did," tittered the Fox. "But with mine own tail I can do as I please, even swear by. Now, it is not your faces, or fins, that I am after. So, if you know what is good for you hasten to your slimy caverns, and never say a word about it. Neither will I; there is little glory in fooling Fish for one who baffled the Angel-of-Death."

Alarmed and ashamed, the finny Committee returned to Leviathan and told him what had happened. Leviathan grew very wroth, and the deep murky Sea began to boil like a witch's cauldron. As a punishment for their incompetency, or, as he thought, their gross neglect of duty, he commanded the Sea-Lion to kill the Seal, the Whale to swallow the Sea-Lion, the Sharks to devour the Whale, and called on little Kalbith to torment the Sharks till they died a slow, lingering death. Then he ordered the deep, murky Sea to spew their dishonored carcasses out to where the Fox might see and eat them, for His Majesty, with all his disappointment, believed that wisdom is entitled to a reward. And, O my Best Beloved, how the Fox did eat them! How he flayed their fins, scratched their scales, gulped their oil, glutted on their flesh, and scraped their bones; how at every bite he turned a somersault, or stood on his head, or made faces and grimaces and growled an improvised little ditty:

"With my heart
Should I part,
To please these foolish Fishes?

O, no, I say,
Better THIS way!
Gee, such dainty dishes!"

But Master Renard little suspected that at that very moment he was playing into the hands of the Angel-of-Death. He ate, and he ate, and he ate, until his stomach burst asunder, and he who escaped the Domain-of-the-Deep soon stalked a gloomy Shade in the vast Dominion-of-Darkness.

TALE THE EIGHTH

THEY WHO NEVER DIED

YOU have already heard, O my Best Beloved, about little Hol who flew back into the Garden - of - Paradise and remained there forever. And I am sure you know about the Prophet Elijah who, while he was walking and talking with his favorite Elisha went up in a whirlwind to heaven. But as the Angel-of-Death is seldom deprived of his prey I shall tell you this afternoon of the few others whom the Holy One, praised-be-He, in His mercy, saw fit to exempt from the doom to which all the living were condemned when Mother-of-All-Living tasted of the Tree-of-Knowing-Good-and-Evil.

Yes, *Zdakah tazzil mimmaveth,* "Righteousness, or kindliness, delivereth from death", as King Solomon says in his Book-of-Proverbs. But though, of course, he meant from real, eternal death, the death of the Soul, it happened twice or thrice that righteousness, or kindliness, delivered also from the death of the Body.

And the first to be thus rewarded with an undying body was, like Hol, a little Bird by the pretty name of Urshanah.

Urshanah was one of "the fowl of the air" who went into the Ark with Noah, when the Holy One, praised-be-He, was about to destroy the earth because it became filled with violence. Now Noah, who was a very righteous and whole-hearted man, was exceedingly considerate of his fellow-passengers. He provided for their every comfort; like the good host that he was he made them feel perfectly at home. Nor was it an easy task to please them. There were so many of them, and their habits were so various, that he and his good wife, and three sons and three daughters-in-law, were kept busy day and night to supply them with food and drink. For each of the birds and beasts had to have his own way, to be fed at his regular hour, to divert himself in his accustomed manner. The Mole, for instance, was permitted to burrow in the lower deck and had to be watched that he sprang no leak. The Eagle liked to fly in the upper cabin, and would be likely to break the panes of the only window at the top and let in the Flood. The Lion enjoyed roaring all day, and the Owl indulged in hooting the live-

long night. More than once poor Noah and his family were so distracted by the ceaseless noise that they were at a loss to know what to do.

The only considerate and thoughtful one of them all was Little Urshanah. *She* never made a noise; never insisted on her own way at feeding time or at play; but seemed ever content and thankful for whatever she got, and tried her utmost to be as cheerful and helpful as a little bird could be.

One day Noah was so tired and exhausted that he retired earlier than usual. But he did not sleep long when he was startled by the thought that somebody had been overlooked. Quickly he jumped and noticed that the magic jewel which indicated time by its varied lustre, glittered to its full capacity, a sure sign that it was the middle of the night, and also that somebody, somewhere, had been overlooked.

And so indeed it proved to be. For after a diligent search on the lower and middle deck, he noticed on the third deck, in a remote corner thereof, Little Urshanah standing on one leg, her pretty beak cozily tucked away under her right wing, her beaming eyes wide open.

"Why art not thou asleep?" asked kind-hearted Noah. "Thou must be hungry."

"I am," faintly yet cheerfully replied Little Urshanah. "But a little hunger means a better appetite, and I will enjoy my breakfast so much the more because of it. Thou wert so busy all day I did not care to trouble thee with my meal too."

"Thou art a most considerate little creature," said Noah, much affected by her thoughtfulness. "May our Father-in-Heaven grant thee life everlasting."

And the Holy One, praised-be-He, Who "never stints the reward of every creature which does a kindly deed," Who formerly rewarded the Ravens for teaching Red-Earth how to bury Abel, and was later to reward the Dogs for not wagging their tongues at the Children-of-Israel when they escaped from the Land-of-Bondage, heard the wish of the righteous and whole-hearted Noah, heard and granted it. And like Little Hol for her obedience, so Little Urshanah because of her thoughtfulness and cheerfulness, remains alive to this very day.

Another one who never died was a Little Maid by the name of Ishtahar. However, she turned into a Star.

This happened not long after Man began to multiply upon the face of the earth. The children of Red-Earth and Mother-of-All-Living began to lose the good manners and the kindly disposition which characterized their parents who were brought up in the Garden-of-Paradise, till, at last, the earth was filled with violence and wickedness. And the Holy One, praised-be-He, was aggrieved in His heart that He had made Man, and the Angels-of-Peace wept bitterly that their hopes were disappointed, while those who were thrown down from heaven were highly elated over it, and their shouts of joy could be heard even in the Realm-of-Light, as they called to one another: "Aha, we told Him so!"

At this, not a few of the Angels who were at first in favor of the creation of Man now joined the host of those who opposed it, and appearing before the Throne-of-Glory they cried "Judge-of-All-the-Earth, let not thy Holy Spirit be grieved. 'What is Man that Thou shouldst be mindful of him; and the Son-of-

Man that Thou shouldst consider him?' Let us go down, and we will replenish the earth with men and women worthy to be called Thy children."

"Think ye that ye can do better than Man?" asked the Holy One, praised-be-He.

"We know it!" said they.

The Holy One, praised-be-He, smiled a sad, sad smile, and granted their request. And soon two hundred Angels were seen on their flight from their heavenly home to the abode of Man. But it was not long before they, too, were no proof against the allurements of This-World. Indeed, some of them grew to be even worse than those whom they undertook to reform or replace, and added much to the violence which already filled the face of the earth. It was they who produced the Nefilim and Anaqim, the Emim and Refaim and Zamzumim, the mere mention of whose names struck terror in the heart of whoever heard them.

By the way, it was a little girl great-grandchild of one of them who caused ten of the Spies whom Moses, our Teacher, peace be upon Him, sent to spy out the Promised-Land to bring the evil report which made the Children-

of-Israel die in the Wilderness — though, of course, as she did not do it intentionally, I do not mean to blame her for it. This little girl, whose name I do not remember, was peeling a pomegranate just at the time when the Twelve Spies silently entered the Garden of the Palace in which she made her home. The peeling was so large that when she threw it out of the window it covered them completely, as if they were no bigger than grasshoppers. Fortunately, so they seemed also to the little girl, or they probably would never have returned to tell the tale. For when she did her sweeping she swept out peeling, Spies, and all.

But to return to my Tale. Among the two hundred, were Shamhazai and Azael, in fact, they were the leaders. They held out the longest against the allurements of This-World; they persisted the hardest in behaving like Angels and in teaching Man what to do and what to avoid doing. But finding how hard it was, and fearing lest they too would ultimately sink to the level of their two hundred followers, they decided, before it was too late, to fly back to the Realm-of-Light.

Something, however, kept them earthbound.

It was love for Little Ishtahar, whose beauty and gentleness they could not resist. Both of them loved her dearly, but Shamhazai loved her to distraction. Again and again he proposed to marry her; again and again he offered her the most gorgeous gifts. But Little Ishtahar turned a deaf ear to his proposals, and refused to accept his beautiful gifts. Seeing what became of the others, she was afraid of him too; and preferred rather to be loved by a good, honest though ordinary human being than by a big, beautiful but probably bad, Angel.

Once, as he was telling her of his great love, and was showing her a most gorgeous gift, Little Ishtahar told him that she was too small yet to think of marrying anybody, and that the only gifts she would accept from strangers were the gifts of the mind. "If thou truly lovest me," said she, "then teach me all that is known in the Realm-of-Light whence thou comest."

"With all my heart," answered Shamhazai, happy thus to have an excuse for visiting her more often.

And Little Ishtahar learned, and learned, and learned, till she knew almost everything her Angel teacher knew, save one thing: she did not know how to fly.

"Ah, Shamhazai," said she one day, "I wish I knew how to fly."

"I can teach thee, though thou hast no wings. All thou hast to do is to pronounce distinctly the *Real-Name,* and thine every wish will be granted, even thy wish to fly."

"Then please, please, teach it to me," begged Little Ishtahar. No sooner, however, did she master the *Real-Name* than she made a wish to fly to heaven. And immediately she found herself lifted up higher and higher, upward and upward, above the hills, beyond the clouds, past the Sun and the Moon, until the earth looked no bigger than the numberless stars that twinkled around her. Thereupon Shamhazai also mentioned the *Real-Name,* and accustomed as he was to flying and aided by his six enormous wings, he surely would have overtaken her, but for the Archangel Michael who hastened to her rescue just in the nick of time. This "Prince-of-Israel", ever ready to help those who were in trouble, recalled how Samael when he fell, tried to drag him by his wings from heaven down to the earth, and was determined not to let Shamhazai do the same to one who was so anxious to go up from earth

to heaven. He therefore grabbed him, bound him with fetters of fire, and suspended him between heaven and earth with his feet upward and his head downward as an example to all who could, if they would, walk the lofty paths of goodness but who allow their heads and their hearts to pull them down earthward.

Little Ishtahar, however, was unaware of the danger from which she escaped. All she knew was that things were constantly becoming different, brighter and more beautiful. She herself, she felt, was somehow getting lighter and lighter, the distances she could see became ever greater and greater, and the sounds she could hear seemed to be more and more remote. To her amazement the nearer she got to heaven the more distinctly was she able to see those she loved on earth, and to hear the sighs they uttered when they mentioned her name and wondered where in the world she was. She was still more surprised when, on passing her hand over her head, she discovered that her hat turned into a most beautiful crown such as no earthly princess ever wore, and was most astonished to find that the simple little dress she had on when she "hopped off", became a long flowing robe

of the most precious, shimmering white material. But her amazement exceeded all bounds, when the everlasting heavenly doors flung open and she saw the sights which no eye hath seen, and heard the sounds which no ear hath heard. For she arrived at last in the Realm-of-Light.

Then a Voice, which sounded like the cooing of a turtle-dove, was heard saying: "My Little Ishtahar, because thou wert not like the other fair daughters of Man, and hast refused a big, beautiful Angel, lest he too would degenerate like those who followed him, be thou henceforth a shining star in My heaven, and shed rays of light upon the earth when it is wrapped in gloom and darkness. Even as it will be written in my Torah:

"They that are wise shall shine
as the brightness of the firmament;
And they that turn many to righteousness
as the stars, for ever and ever."

Thenceforth Ishtahar became one of the seven most brilliant and beautiful stars in the firmament of heaven, and whenever a little maid refuses to do what is wrong, even though she likes it, and chooses to do what is right, even though

it may not be agreeable, Ishtahar glitters her brightest, twinkles her happiest, and prays for and blesses her.

The other who never died was an old man, who became much higher than all the Angels, because throughout his life he strove to do his best. His name was Enoch, the son of Jared.

I call him old, but measured by the length of life of the people of his day he was rather young. He lived to be *only* three hundred and sixty-five years, which is much less than any of the ten generations who increased and multiplied from the creation of Red-Earth to the birth of Noah. But in this comparatively short period he accomplished more than all of them, more even than his son Methuselah who lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years.

Enoch was greatly grieved to see his fellow-men, whom he loved dearly, follow in the footsteps of the Fallen Angels and make of this beautiful world a place of sorrow and suffering. He was sure that if they would know the truth they would do the right, and be the happier. But he knew that in order to improve others he

first had to improve himself, and not to be hindered in his self-improvement he became a hermit and spent many years in meditating and fasting and praying.

One day, after thinking his sublimest thoughts, and offering his sincerest prayer, he heard a Voice calling to him softly "Enoch! Enoch!" And he said, "Here I am!"

"Enoch," said the Voice, "I have received thy prayer and presented it to the Holy One, praised-be-He, Who was exceedingly pleased with it, and I was sent to help thee make thy hope come true."

"And who art thou?" asked Enoch, who saw nobody near him.

"I am Michael the Archangel, one of the Seven who were created ere the world was made. I am stationed at the right hand of the Throne-of-Glory, and my chief occupation is to see that the Creation is not consumed by fire or destroyed by water. But busy as I am with my task, I am never too busy to present the prayers of the pure and the sincere before the Holy One, praised-be-He, or to conduct the Souls of the true and good either to Araboth, where stands

the Palace-of-Goof, or to Zebul, the Heavenly Jerusalem where I officiate as High Priest."

"And wilt thou conduct me, too, into Araboth or Zebul?"

"With all my heart, if after thou improvest thyself thou doest thy utmost to improve others."

"But ah, my lord," cried Enoch, "the more I think the more I find how great is my ignorance, and how little I am fit to teach others."

"One needs not be overly wise to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly. But since thou seekest wisdom thou shalt have it, too."

The words were scarcely spoken when Enoch felt as if he saw a light blindingly bright. And suddenly all the mysteries seemed to clear away, and all the difficult problems which he tried to solve seemed to be very simple; and he could understand the language of the birds and of the beasts, of the plants and of the stones, of the creeping things and of the swimming things; and he could tell the number of the stars in heaven, the drops of water in the sea, and of the grains of sand on the sea-shore.

Still Enoch was not satisfied, and still his craving for wisdom did not abate. He wanted to know what is Above and what Below, what was before he was born, and what would be after he died. He even desired to have a taste of death, so that he could tell all about it to the living. The more he learned, the more he wanted to learn.

His every wish was granted. He died and came to life again. He got a glimpse of the Valley-of-Hinnom and saw the wicked punished for their vices. He grasped a branch of the Tree-of-Knowing-Good-and-Evil, which hung over the wall of the Garden-of-Paradise and he climbed up high enough and beheld how the good are rewarded for their virtues.

Yet there were some things that he did not know and could not understand. He did not know who would be the great and good in time to come, and he could not understand any other language spoken by men except his own.

"This is more than I can teach thee," said the Voice, in which there seemed to be a touch of sadness, "for we Angels speak only Hebrew. There is only one of us who masters all the seventy languages which will be spoken in the

future. His name is Gabriel, and I have no doubt he will be too glad to teach thee all he knows. But as for the great and good, I have a book written by thy great grandfather which he gave me before his death. In it thou wilt find all that thou seekest to know." And to Enoch's surprise he saw before him a volume, the title of which was: *"This is the Book of the Generations of Red-Earth"*.

It was the first book Enoch ever saw, and it was most wonderful in his sight. In the beginning he could not make out what it was all about, but before long he managed to read it, and soon he knew everything about all future generations, about their Leaders, their Saints and their Sages.

"Now it is time that thou shouldst go and teach thy fellowmen," he heard the Voice saying after he had read Red-Man's book from beginning to end, and had taken his last lesson from Gabriel in the seventy languages which were to be spoken in the course of time.

Obedient to the Archangel's command, Enoch assumed his task to improve his fellowmen. Wonderfully learned as he was, he yet thought nothing unimportant for him to teach.

Remembering that the Holy One, praised-be-He, Himself taught Adam how to build a fire, and that Gabriel the Archangel instructed him how to till the soil and Mother-of-All-Living how to keep house, Enoch betook himself at first to teach the making of needles and the sewing of garments. Then he gave them lessons in writing and reading, and those who were more apt he instructed in arithmetic and the higher branches of science. But what he taught them more than anything else was to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly.

And to his surprise the people were willing and eager to learn all that he would teach them, and as his fame spread, men and women flocked to him from the four corners of the earth, and four hundred and thirty Kings came to sit at his feet and anointed him as their Lord and Master.

Two hundred and forty-three years reigned Enoch over all mankind, and his reign was the most peaceful and prosperous that our earth ever enjoyed. Then, thinking that his end was drawing near, he resolved to wean his people little by little, so that they might not miss him too much when he would be with them no more.

At first he hid himself from them for three days and three nights. Next he prolonged his absence to seven days, then to thirty days, and lastly to an entire year. And each time he returned his face would beam more brightly, and his voice would sound more sweetly, and his wisdom and knowledge seemed to his hearers to be greater and deeper than before.

One day, when all the Kings of the earth, and their Princes and Judges and subjects were assembled at his house, eagerly drinking in his every word, a Voice was heard saying: "O, Enoch, thou who hast proven thyself a true lover of men, come now and be crowned ruler over the Sons-of-God."

But Enoch preferred to be a teacher of men rather than a ruler over Angels, and despite the Voice he continued his stay for seven days longer. On the eighth day a fiery Horse came down and pranced in front of him, but he tarried. Finally two Angels of fire, one of whom bore on his breast the name of Shemiel and the other Raziel, swooped down from heaven in a chariot of fire, and carried him away, to the consternation of his followers, many of whom so mourned for him that they turned into stones and glaciers.

When Enoch reached within six hundred and fifty thousand miles of the Throne-of-Glory, the Seraphim, Cherubim and Cycles, smelling the odor of dust and ashes, began to protest. "O, Lord of the World," cried they, "wilt Thou allow mere Flesh-and-Blood to mingle with us and to minister unto Thee as if he were one of us?"

"Yes," was the divine reply. "This Flesh-and-Blood ever sought to improve himself and to improve My children on earth. Let him henceforth be ruler over the Sons-of-God in heaven. From now on, as Metatron, by which name he shall be known among you, I appoint him Prince of My Presence, and he shall be entrusted with all My treasures."

And at once Enoch's body became as bright as if it were made of shimmering light, and the Holy One, praised-be-He, Himself took him by the hand and opened to him the thousand gates of wisdom and knowledge, and justice and love and mercy, and put a heavenly crown upon his head, and inscribed His *Real-Name* upon his heart. He then blessed him with five hundred thousand three hundred and twenty blessings, caused each side of him to sprout thirty-six

wings, the length of each of which extended from one end of the world to the other, presented him with five hundred thousand three hundred and sixty eyes, and in a voice which, though still and small, could be heard by all the hosts of heaven, He proclaimed: "Thou didst teach men and minister unto Me, henceforth shalt thou teach Angels and they shall minister unto thee!"

Since then Metatron became the most excellent of the handiwork of the Holy One, praised-be-He, and the guardian of His most precious treasures in heaven. He is known as the Prince of Wisdom, because he is wiser than all his fellow-Angels, and as the Prince of Glory, because he is more beautiful than any of them. But his preference is to be called the Mighty Scribe, for he still loves to study and write down whatever new wisdom he may happen to learn. Neither has he forgotten his days on earth. He is still deeply interested in his former fellow-men. Whenever they pray sincerely he, like Michael, hastens to present their prayer before the Throne-of-Glory; whenever the Soul of a righteous one leaves its earthly abode he, like Michael, opens for it the gates of the Garden-

of-Paradise; and whenever he sees little ones busying themselves with the study of the Torah he enters *into* them and helps them to understand it (except when they study during the latter part of the day, for then, as you know, the Holy One, praised-be-He, Himself comes to their assistance). Stranger still, Archangel though he now is he still enjoys plying his needle and thread, only that now the needle and the thread are of a substance and size such as can be produced only in heaven. Nor is it clothes that he now sews, but continents and whole worlds. And over every seam that he finishes he pronounces the benediction: *"Blessed be the name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever"* . . . .

There was also Serah-bath-Asher, who never died because she always made her grandfather happy.

Of the many grandchildren which Jacob had, none were more charming than Little Serah, none more gifted, none more good. Her nimble fingers were ever busy doing something useful,

her silvery voice always filled the house with sweetest music, her heart was loving and true. No wonder that she was the pet of the household, and that her aged grandfather doted on her more than on any one else.

One day her father and her ten uncles returned from the land of Egypt, whither they had gone to buy food, for the famine was great in the land, and they brought with them strange and almost unbelievable news. They told how one whom they took for an Egyptian Prince proved to be no other than their long lost little brother Joseph; how he made himself known unto them, and how with tears in his eyes he inquired of them "Is my father still alive?" But they told it not above a whisper. They were afraid lest their aged father, weakened by many years of sorrow, might not be able to stand it, and they were at a loss how best to break the news without turning their joy into sorrow.

"Leave it to me," said Little Serah, "I will say it with songs." And off she rushed to her grandfather's room.

Now, among the beautiful things which her Egyptian uncle sent her was a pair of cymbals,

wrought in silver and gold. This she took with her to accompany her song; and never did she play more skillfully, nor sing more sweetly. And as she played and as she sang, slowly yet steadily the old man seemed to awaken as from a disagreeable dream; slowly, yet noticeably, his wrinkled face seemed to smoothen out, and his lack-lustre eyes to brighten up; slowly, yet surely, his great sorrow commenced to leave him, and relief, then hope and finally confidence to take its place. And when she felt that her grandfather was sufficiently strong and able to bear the happy news, her voice rang out clear and silvery in tones sweeter than honey and the honeycomb:

"Uncle Joseph is still alive,
Heigh-ho!
Great in Egypt is his fame,
Loved and honored is his name,
Uncle Joseph is still alive,
Heigh-ho!"

"My child, thou knowest not whereof thou speakest," sobbed the old man. "Alas, my poor boy is dead. An evil beast hath devoured him."

"No, dear Grandpa, no," caressingly replied Little Serah. "He is indeed alive and very happy,

and wants you and all of us to come and live with him and be happy too. See this pair of beautiful cymbals, wrought in silver and gold? He sent it to me from the land of Egypt, where he is ruler over all the land."

"If Joseph be indeed still alive," said the old man almost overcome by the glad tidings, "mayest thou live forever for telling it to me; and, for bringing sunshine into my life may the sun of thy happiness never set."

And the Holy One, praised-be-He, Who delights in seeing one of His children bless another, Himself answered "Amen!"

And Serah-bath-Asher, the granddaughter of Jacob, is alive to this very day! It was she who, on their departure from Egypt four hundred years later, showed the Children-of-Israel the place where her Uncle Joseph was buried, and she was the Wise Woman who saved the city of Beth-Maacha during the time of King David. But when her people sinned and were exiled from their land into Ispahan of Persia, the Holy One, praised-be-He, to spare her the sorrow and suffering of the exile, surrounded her with sixty myriads of Angels, who hastily carried her away

to the Garden-of-Paradise, and there she spends eternity singing celestial hymns of joy to the accompaniment of a pair of beautiful cymbals wrought in silver and gold.

TALE THE NINTH

IN BABYLAND

SOME day, O my Best Beloved, I hope you will become familiar with the elevating thoughts, the wise words and the noble deeds of the Great and the Good through whom the Holy One, praised-be-He, blessed all the families of the earth. These Great and Good ones, however, are mostly older people, who spent years and years in improving their minds and refining their souls. To-day I wish to tell you about some very young folks, so young, indeed, that their ages should be counted not by years, nor by months, but by days and even by hours. These, either because somehow they still remembered what they have learned in the Palace-of-Goof, situated in Araboth, which is the highest of the Seven Heavens, or, and this is more likely, because they were born in those Far-Off days when the world was still young and fresh, had things happen to them, and things were seen by them, and things were done by them, which hardly ever happened to, or

were seen and done by even the wisest and the boldest and the oldest of our day.

When Mother-of-All-Living found herself outside the walls of the Garden-of-Paradise, and saw it surrounded by the sea of ice and guarded by Cherubim with the flaming sword which turned every way, she was exceedingly distressed. Everything seemed dark and gloomy. No longer were there any Angels to wait on her and to dance before her; no longer was she served with celestial food when she was hungry; no longer would heavenly music lull her to sleep every evening and arouse her to joy every morning. And when the darkness descended upon the earth her fear and her grief grew even greater. She was afraid that she would have to live in darkness forever after, and that she would never, never be happy again.

Poor Mother-of-All-Living! Little did she know that the Holy One, praised-be-He, hideth not His Face from any of His children, no matter what they do, or where they are; that His blessings, like His Glory, fill the whole earth; that "none that put their trust in Him shall be desolate". She did not know it, for there were as yet no good men to teach her, nor

did she have loving parents to tell her. So she sat down upon the grass and sobbed, and sobbed, and sobbed.

And without knowing what it meant, her eyes were bedimmed as if by a mist, and down her cheeks came trickling warm little drops which looked like molten crystals. They were the First Tears ever shed by human eyes.

Now, if there is anything that touches the Spirit of the Holy One, praised-be-He, it is the sound of a sob and the sight of a tear. He just *can't* endure them when they come from a broken and contrite heart, as was that of Mother-of-All-Living when she found herself in the strange surroundings which stretched for miles and miles in all directions. It was for this reason that even after the gates of the Garden-of-Paradise were shut, and the windows of heaven were closed, the Gates-of-Tears were left wide open, and the Portals-of-Prayer remained unbarred. It was because of this that He made a Vial for the express purpose of putting in it every tear-drop that it may not be wasted. So, the moment He heard her sobs and, what was more, saw her tears, His anger was gone, and a profound pity, like that of a tender

mother for an unfortunate child, took its place.

"My poor, poor creature," said He, "perhaps I was too harsh. After all are not she and Red-Earth but Flesh-and-Blood? Well, they have been sufficiently punished already. True, I cannot, in justice, change My decree. The gates of the Garden-of-Paradise can no longer be re-opened for them before their death. But I will show them how to make a Garden-of-Paradise of This-World, and I will begin by teaching them how to make a Fire."

At this the Holy One, praised-be-He, picked up two stones, and telling Red-Earth and Mother-of-All-Living to watch, He struck them one against the other. And there was Fire, the First Fire ever made in This-World.

So wonderful was the effect on the first human couple, that they were almost dazed. Everything again was bright and cheerful. The night became as the day. A genial warmth filled their hearts with new joy. And when they tried and found that they would no longer have to depend on the Sun for their light and heat, their gratitude to their Divine Teacher exceeded all bounds, and with bowed heads they acknowledged their thanks in the words which we still

repeat every Going-out-of-the-Sabbath, when by the glow of the big, braided Habdalah-Torch we say: *"Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who createst the Light of the Fire!"*

But the Holy One, praised-be-He, was not satisfied with merely teaching them how to make fire, and how to apply it to cooking and baking, warming and lighting. He wished to give them a still greater surprise, to make each of them stare in wonderment as when they beheld one another for the first time in the beautiful Garden-of-Paradise.

So, no sooner did they fall asleep, than something remarkable came to pass. It was the arrival of *four* Babies, two little boys and two little girls; *the first and the cutest Babies that ever were born!*

I call them little, because by the side of their mother they were no bigger than a modern Baby by the side of its mother. In reality they were almost full-grown. And the biggest and the cutest of them was the one whom Mother-of-All-Living later called Cain.

Nor was he only the biggest and the cutest, he was also the best and the kindest. They could all talk, of course, in Hebrew; they could all walk; and they all knew things which even their parents didn't know. But when it came to thoughtfulness, he surpassed them all. No sooner did he open his baby-blue eyes, than he thought of his mother. It grieved him to see her lying on a hard couch, with no bedding to make her comfortable. So, before his sisters and brother could say "Boo!" which might have waked her up, away he rushed to the near-by fields, picked up as many straw-stalks as he could find, and as fast as his little limbs could carry him returned to his home. There he made a delightfully soft mattress for his mother to lie on, and, having arranged everything as nicely as was possible with what there was at his disposal, he crept quietly into his cradle, and slept as sweetly as if he were still in the Palace-of-Goof, in the highest of the Seven Heavens.

Ah, how thrilled was Mother-of-All-Living, and what joy filled her throbbing heart at the sight of her Babies and the sound of their voices! Yet even this was surpassed when she beheld, for she was in reality already awake, the biggest

and the cutest of them come back with his burden, and watched him, without his being aware of it, prepare that delightfully soft mattress for her to lie upon. No wonder her eyes were bedimmed again as if by a mist, and down her cheeks came trickling once more warm little drops which looked like molten pearls. She wept for the second time. But this time the Tears were Tears-of-Joy,—the first of the kind ever shed by human eyes.

And having lavished innumerable hugs and kisses upon each of her Babies, she bestowed a special hug and a special kiss upon the Best and the Kindest of them all, saying: "My first thought was to call thee Cain because thou must have been left here by the Good Lord Himself; henceforth I will call thee Cain because it also means in our language 'Little *Straw-Stalk*' " . .

Months passed, and years too. Cain grew to be a man, even by the standards of those Far-Off times. But, alas, from being the Best and Kindest of Babies he turned out to be the worst and cruellest of Boys, and later even broke his poor mother's heart by the way he acted toward his own brother. Yet Mother-of-All-Living never ceased loving him, and praying

for him till the Holy One, praised-be-He, forgave him. To her, no matter what he did, he ever and always remained Little Straw-Stalk. . .

This Baby also was born in those Far-Off times, and he also must have been very good and very kind, though whether he continued to be so or, like Cain, turned out to be very bad and very cruel, I cannot tell. He certainly was very *brave,* as you will see by what will follow:

You already know that Lilith never forgave Red-Earth for having given her up in favor of Mother-of-All-Living, and swore to be cruel to his children forever after. To this day she keeps track of every new-born Baby, and if it happens to be in a house on the door of which there is no *Mezuzah,* upon which is inscribed *Shaddai,* the Hebrew word for "Almighty", which she dreads, she immediately sends one of her *Shedim,* those horrid servants of hers, to tease and torment it. Well, it happened one night when a Baby, finding that his mother was quite ill, jumped out of his bed the moment he was born and rushed to fetch the doctor. No sooner,

however, was he outside of his house than *Somebody* grabbed him by the leg, and in a voice which would make most of us shudder exclaimed:

"Aha, at last I have got thee. My Mistress Lilith hath long been denied the pleasure of teasing and tormenting one of Red-Earth's Babies. Thou shalt have the honor to contribute to her Majesty's happiness. My, how she'll delight in making thee cry: 'Mamma!' "

Do you think the Baby was frightened, O my Best Beloved? No, not the least bit. He was too wise and too brave to be scared of anybody. He knew that even when we walk in the valley of the Shadow-of-Death we should fear no evil *from* others, only the evil we may do *to* others. He also knew what was to be said by the sweetest singer of Israel:

"Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flieth by day. . . .
For He will give His Angels charge over thee
To keep thee in thine every way".

So with a glistening grin upon his gentle face the Baby made reply: "Shed, Shed, go and tell

thy Mistress Lilith what the King of Israel will someday say to the King of Aram: 'Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off' ; or as they who will speak the English language will put it: 'He laughs best, who laughs last.' "

Upon this there followed a furious fight which was hardly surpassed when the Angel challenged our Father Jacob when he crossed over the Ford-of-Yabboq. And ah, my Best Beloved, how they wrestled and how they grappled, how they beat and how they cuffed and pounded! But the night was far spent and the Shed could not prevail against the few-hours-old Baby.

Suddenly they heard the shrill crow of a Rooster.

"Thou Babe," called the Shed, stopping short in the midst of a scuffle, "the shrill crow of a Rooster is to me a reminder that my leave in thy Lower-World is expired, and that I must report for duty in my Mistress' Dominion-of-Darkness. Were it not for that there would be one mouth less for thy mother to feed."

"And thou Shed," answered the Baby, "thou mayest thank thy stars for meeting me while I

am in haste to call the doctor. However, Rooster or no Rooster, thou shalt not depart from this Lower-World unless thou sayest 'Amen' after I pronounce a blessing."

Now the hardest and most disagreeable thing for a Shed, or any evil Angel, to do is to bless others, or to say "Amen" after someone pronounces a blessing. No wonder the Shed at first flatly refused, and feigned he was ready to resume the fight. But when he heard the shrill crow of a Rooster the second time and felt himself growing weaker and weaker, he shiveringly listened as the Baby repeated a blessing he heard in the Palace-of-Goof, which is in the highest of the Seven Heavens, and summoning his remaining strength he made a supreme effort and answered: *"Amen"*.

And ere the Rooster finished his shrill crow the third time, a distorted and disgruntled Shed was seen, sorrowfully winging his way back and disappearing with the breaking day through the dismal doors leading to Lilith's Dominion-of-Darkness. . . .

Such were some of the feats performed by a few of the Babies who lived when the world was still young and fresh, and who knew things and could do things which even the wisest and oldest of our time don't know and can't do. Listen to what happened, at a later time, to some *Hebrew Babes in the Woods.*

It was when the King of Egypt, who did not remember what Joseph the Righteous did for his country, issued his cruel decree that all the newly-born Boy-Babies of the Hebrews should be thrown into the Nile.

The poor mothers were greatly distressed, and did not know what to do. Some hid their little ones in garrets, some in cellars. But sooner or later the Sly Spies would discover them, and wreak vengeance on the entire family. A favorite way of these sleuths in tracing their tiny victims was to bring with them a Baby of their own, and make it cry so loud and so long till the hidden infant, as infants do, would hear it and cry in response. At last, when every other means failed, some of the Hebrew mothers decided to rely on the sole mercy of the Holy One, praised-be-He, and taking their precious darlings to the woods they left them there to

themselves, only saying as they kissed them Good-bye: "If the Good Lord be with you, you need not fear; what can Man do unto you?"

And the Holy One, praised-be-He, who so loves children that He is willing to maintain the whole world just for the sake of one breath of a Baby, and Who never disappoints grown-ups who have faith in His mercy, looked down upon the poor mothers, looked down upon their helpless Babies and caused His Face to shine upon them. For every mother who left her infant, he dispatched an Angel to take her place. And, O my Best Beloved, what wonderful nurses they proved to be! They washed each little body till it became as white as the fresh-driven snow. They rubbed each little limb till the blood tingled in every vein and the glow of health was manifest in their every move. And how thoughtful they were of the Babies! Though they themselves never eat, (except when they have to for company's sake, and then they only make-believe), yet knowing that clean and healthy human Babies are ravenously hungry, they saw to it that they should not suffer in the least. And they had a

way of feeding them all their own. All they did was to put in each Baby's mouth a little magic pebble out of which he would suck all the milk that was good for him to drink. Then they would put in each Baby's mouth another little magic pebble, out of which he would get all the honey that was good for him to eat. And having supplied him with all his wants, the good Angel-nurse would sing him softly to a most refreshing, night-long sleep.

Of course the Sly Spies were greatly puzzled at the falling off of the number of their tiny victims and scoured every nook and corner of the Land of Goshen, where dwelt the Hebrews, for their innocent prey. They searched the garrets, and they searched the cellars, they searched the closets and they searched the coffers; but all in vain. Finally they extended their search into the woods.

One day, as they were laboriously making their way through the thick underbrush, and every now and then peering through the dense foliage of the stately trees, their ears caught the soft and low sound of a lullaby, as an Angel-nurse was crooning a little one to sleep, and their eyes discerned diminutive figures dancing,

climbing, seesawing and leap-frogging in the distant clearing.

"Well, well, so this is where they hide themselves!" thought they. "From now on they shall escape us no more. What sweet morsels they will make for our starved sacred crocodiles, these plump little Hebrews. How our Nile-God will bless us, and how our Pharaoh will reward us!" And on they rushed, sure that they would now round them all up at one blow.

But the longer they ran, the further away seemed the soft and low sound of the lullaby, and the scene of the dancing, climbing, seesawing and leap-frogging little figures. When at last the shades of night began to fall, and with their hands and faces scratched, their feet tired, and their clothes torn, they finally decided to retrace their steps homeward, they concluded that what they saw was nothing else than the Yellow Lilies which waved to and fro to the gentle breeze, and what they heard was only the twitter of the flock of Blue-Birds as they fluttered their wings and skimmed far away.

However, to make sure, they consulted one of those Wise-Wizards, or *Hartumim,* for which Egypt was famous. And this was his reply:

"Verily, the Yellow Lilies and the Blue-Birds were playmates of the Hebrew Babies whom you were seeking. The earth must have swallowed them on your approach. Their God, you know, is capable of doing almost anything for those who seek refuge in Him. Just plow over the clearing, and you will cut them to pieces."

So they plowed, and plowed; and turned the sod over and over. But they dug up nothing but stones, and all they got for their pains were nicks and notches on their plowshares, and boils and calluses on their hands.

Yet the Babies *were* there, sure enough, even as the Wise-Wizard guessed, hidden in little caves under the surface of the soil. And they felt none-the-worse for being where they were.

For the Holy One, praised-be-He, gave His Angels charge over them, and they fanned them with their wings so that they had plenty of fresh air, and they caused their faces to shine so that they had plenty of light, and they made their hair grow so long and so thick that it served as a coverlet at night and as a cloak by day.

Thus they spent their Babyhood mostly in the breezy woods, partly in their cozy caves, till the Sly Spies abandoned their quest and the danger was past. Then they returned to their mothers, told them all about their Angel-nurses, their dancing, climbing, seesawing and frog-leaping in the breezy woods, their shelter in the cozy caves, and their deliverance from the hands of the cruel Egyptians. And with hearts full of joy and gratitude they all joined in one glad song, the refrain of which ran:

> *"Out of my straits I called upon the Lord;*
> *He answered me with great enlargement.*
> *The Lord is with me, I will not fear;*
> *What can man do unto me?"*

These are but few of the many Tales which came down to us from Babyland, the country which we all pass through as we start on our march in the Land-of-the-Living, and which even to-day is the prettiest place that ever may be seen. I will tell you now just one more story, a story of a Baby who lived comparatively recently, only about two thousand years

ago, and who was taken back to the Highest Heaven because This-World was found not yet good enough for such as he to stay in. Listen to what befell *Little Mnahem ben-Zedekiah:*

On one of those sorrow-laden days when the Romans besieged the Holy City of Jerusalem, an Israelite was plowing his field, when suddenly one of his team of Oxen uttered a fierce bellow which was heard far and wide and attracted the attention of a way-faring Ishmaelite.

"Stop thy plowing," said he, approaching the Israelite. "By the sound of the bellow of thine Ox I know that the glory has departed from the Land-of-Israel, and thy holy Temple lieth in ruins."

But as the Israelite was about to unyoke his Oxen, and to sit himself upon the ground, suddenly the other of his team uttered a bellow which sounded even louder and was heard even farther, and caused the departing Ishmaelite to approach him again.

"Keep up thy plowing," said he. "By the sound of the bellow of thine other Ox I know that he was born who would save thy people from all its sorrows."

"And where is he?" anxiously asked the Israelite.

"In a village near Bethlehem."

"Knowest thou his name, and that of his father?"

"His name is Mnahem, his father's is Zedekiah."

Curious to find out whether the Ishmaelite was right, the Israelite sold his field and Oxen, his house and goods, and investing the proceeds of his sales in swaddling cloth he turned his feet in the direction of the village near Bethlehem.

Once there, he began to cry his goods, calling everywhere "Swaddling cloth, swaddling cloth! Who wants swaddling cloth?" And all the women who had little babes came and bought swaddling cloth; but the mother of little Mnahem was not among them.

"Are there no other mothers who need swaddling cloth?" asked the Israelite.

"I know one," answered a woman. "The wife of Zedekiah recently gave birth to a most beautiful baby-boy. But she is very peculiar. Instead of rejoicing she is sorrowing, and sheds bitter tears everytime one comes to see her."

Hearing this, the Israelite inquired where the mother of the new baby lived, and went to ask her if she wanted to buy any swaddling cloth for her Baby.

"Alas," was her reply, "ask me not to buy swaddling cloth but mourning clothes. My son was born in an evil hour. The glory has departed from the Land-of-Israel, and our holy Temple lieth in ruins."

"Cease thy weeping," consoled the stranger, "for I know of a surety that in his day our land will be redeemed and the Temple of our Lord will be restored. Take all thou needest, and I shall return for my money within a few days."

After a few days the stranger, now convinced that the Ishmaelite was an Angel in disguise, came back and brought with him many pretty presents for the Baby, and costly gifts for Zedekiah and his wife. He hoped to see the beautiful Boy wrapped in the white swaddling cloth which he left for him. Instead, he found the mother bending over an empty cradle dressed in black mourning clothes, and lamenting most pitifully, "Alas, my son, thou wert born in an evil hour, thou wert born in an evil hour!"

"What has happened to him?" asked the stranger.

"Ah, my sweet, sweet baby," she wept. "He was snatched away from me before my very eyes. It was soon after thy departure. I wrapped him up in the swaddling cloth and began to sing him to sleep, when lo, a storm came down as if from heaven, straight as an arrow toward my unhappy home. It raised the roof as one raises the lid of a box, wound itself around my baby even as I wound the swaddling cloth around his little body, lifted him out of his cradle as tenderly as I lifted him whenever it was time for him to nurse, carried him through the open roof, and in an instant my baby, my precious Baby, was no more!"

"What was thy baby's name?" inquired the stranger.

"We called him 'Mnahem', hoping to find him a consolation."

"And a consolation you may still find him," said the stranger. He then told her what he heard from the Ishmaelite who was an Angel in disguise, and he reminded her of the old

belief that on the day when the holy Temple would be destroyed the Messiah would be born, and that he would be snatched up to heaven there to wait till the "Last-of-Days" when he would return and make *This* earth the best place to live in; when no one would hurt anybody, and no one will destroy anything, and the Holy One, Himself, praised-be-He, will reign forever and ever. And the sorrow-stricken mother listened, and believed, and hoped, and her tears of grief were turned into tears of gladness and gratitude that she was privileged to be the mother of him who some day is to save her people, and all mankind, from all their sorrows.

TALE THE TENTH

EVERYBODY AND EVERYSOUL

EBUNAH AND TIFERET were two little Sprites who belonged to the family of Everysoul, and lived ever since the sixth of Days-of-Beginning in the beautiful Palace-of-Goof, situated in Araboth, which is the highest of the Seven Heavens. They loved each other passing well, and though they pranked and frolicked, and played and prattled with the innumerable other little Sprites, they preferred to be together and alone as often as possible, although as yet they knew not why.

One day, in the midst of their play, they heard a still, small, yet very distinct Voice calling again and again: *"Bath Ploni liploni, Ben Ploni liplonith"*.

"Only a *Bath-Qol,"* said the two little Sprites to each other. For they grew quite accustomed to hearing the Echo of a heavenly Voice resounding through the Palace-of-Goof, and, never suspecting that this time it had any reference to them, they continued to play to the end of the day.

Yet Little Tiferet was never again quite the same. She was not exactly sad—little Sprites in the beautiful Palace-of-Goof are never sad—but something told her something unusual was going to happen. Not wishing to talk about it to Tebunah for fear he might tease her and make fun of her, she waited, and watched and wondered what it was going to be.

And Tiferet was right. Something did happen in the Lower-World which had an effect on the Upper-Worlds, made a considerable change in the beautiful Palace-of-Goof, and caused her to forsake the family of Everysoul and cast her lot with the household of Everybody.

For forty days after she heard the Bath-Qol's proclamation, Lilah, the Angel-of-Night, ascended and presented herself before the Throne-of-Glory, her face somber with thought, her heart palpitating with emotion. On her head was a diadem studded with twinkling stars, in one hand she held a sceptre of ebony perfumed with the fragrance of a thousand flowers, and prettily decorated with orange blossoms, and the pink, white, crimson and gold of the marigold and larkspur, maidenhair and mistletoe.

In the half open palm of her other hand, holding it as gently and as carefully as if it were a most priceless gem, sparkled a tiny drop of dew.

Quietly and tremblingly she stood, as if fearing to disturb the sacred silence around her. Suddenly a sweet sound was heard. It was the sound of a kiss, followed by a gentle whisper escaping the lips of two lovers in the Lower-World, which sound, gentle and low though it was, yet pierced through the Seven Heavens and reached and resounded round the Throne-of-Glory.

At this the star-studded diadem on Lilah's head began to twinkle brighter than ever, her ebony sceptre diffused its fragrance of a thousand flowers more lavishly than before, the orange blossoms and marigold, the larkspur, maidenhair and mistletoe began to wave to and fro, the tiny dew-drop sparkled a million-fold; and the Angel-of-Night, her courage renewed, began thus:

"O Father of Lovingkindness! From roaming o'er the earth am I come, and I brought Thee as an offering this precious drop of dew."

"Thou didst well, beloved Lilah," answered the Holy One, praised-be-He. "Thou couldst

not have brought an offering more acceptable in My sight. Behold, out of it I will fashion a human being whom I will love and exalt above any of My Spirit-beings. With glory and honor I shall crown him. With grace and beauty, with wisdom and might will I endow him, and he shall be able to choose between what is good and what is evil."

Then the Holy One, praised-be-He, took one of the Four Keys which He always keeps in His Presence, and gave it to Gabriel who, knowing what was expected of him without being told, flapped his six huge wings in the direction of Araboth, and in the twinkling of an eye returned with a little Sprite clasped in the loving embrace of two of his wings. It was Little Tebunah.

"My darling Tebunah," said He. "Since the sixth of the Days-of-Beginning thou hast been living in the beautiful Palace-of-Goof, playing with pretty Little Tiferet. The time is now come for thee to enter this drop of dew."

"O Father of Lovingkindness," pleaded Little Tebunah, "into this drop of dew I care not to enter. Pray let me remain where I always was, in the beautiful Palace-of-Goof,

a-playing with my loving companions. Please, please, do not imprison me in this drop of dew. Am I not part of Thy very Self?"

"Thou art so indeed," answered the Holy One, praised-be-He, "but so also is this tiny drop of dew into which I bid thee enter, and for which I destined thee ever since I formed thee. Be not afraid. Small and frail as it may seem to thee, thou canst make of it a palace surpassing by far the beautiful Palace-of-Goof."

"But O Father of Lovingkindness," persisted Little Tebunah, "I do so want to stay with Little Tiferet. No place in heaven above or on the earth beneath will be beautiful to me without her."

"Remain any longer where thou art, thou mayest not," replied the Holy One, blessed-be-He, somewhat sternly yet smilingly. "Thou must not expect to be an exception, and not to go whither so many went before thee. Long have I permitted thee to prank and play. 'Tis time thou beginnest to make something of thyself as do all My children in the Lower-World. Thou canst, if thou but wilst, make thyself My messenger unto them, and teach them to love Me even as I love them. Neither wilt thou be

far from Me, for wherever and whenever thou wilt seek Me, thou shalt find Me; and in every place where thou wilt call upon My Name, I will come unto thee and bless thee. Nor art thou to leave without My gifts. Behold I present thee with a Little-World like unto My Big-World. I make thee master over two hundred and forty-eight strong guards and three hundred and sixty-five obedient servants. And thou shalt be in that Little-World what I am in My Big-World; even as I am unseen, so shalt thou be unseen; and just as I am known through My works, so shalt thou be known through thy works; and whenever the bands of sleep close the shutters of thy Little-World thou shalt visit Me and tell me what thou didst during the day and I will tell thee what is going to happen in days to come. What is more," added the Holy One, praised-be-He, with the tender twinkle of a loving mother's eye, "pretty Tiferet will join thee a little later, and thou shalt have her all to thyself, and other little Sprites will follow and come and stay with you, and make your home in the Lower-World far more beautiful than the Palace-of-Goof whence you and they came."

Little Tebunah, however, was still reluctant to leave, and still he continued to cry and to plead: "Please, please, let me remain where I always was." But his crying and pleading were of no avail. Two stalwart Angels seized him and squeezed him into the drop of dew, while a Bath-Qol proclaimed:

"Thou must be formed against thy will;
Thou must be formed against thy will!"

And for the first time Little Tiferet, who heard the Bath-Qol, though she knew not what it meant, shuddered, and felt very, very lonesome; and for the first time she found the Palace-of-Goof a sad place to stay in. For Little Tebunah was no longer by her side.

Imprisoned in his drop of dew, like a tiny chick in its shell, Tebunah was, however, far from being uncomfortable. For no sooner was he squeezed into it than the two stalwart Angels turned it into a magnificent room, with the ceiling and the walls and the floor lined with most marvelous tapestries of red, white and blue. It was lighted with a lamp by which

he could see from one end of the world to the other, much further, in fact, than when he was in the Palace-of-Goof which is in the highest of the Seven Heavens. Moreover, he was made to feel that this magnificent room was a *part of himself,* and that, unlike the Palace-of-Goof, it would move with him whithersoever he went.

"It certainly is wonderful," thought Tebunah, as he began to get accustomed to his new environment. And when he noticed the two stalwart Angels standing guard over him he was delighted to see them.

"We are glad thou likest it here," said one of them. "But to help thee pass away the few months thou art to remain here we will show thee some of the sights which may prove of interest, and certainly of benefit, to thee later on."

They took him to the Garden-of-Paradise, and ah, how happy he was with all the wonders they showed him; the unsurpassed mansions, the streets paved with gold; the rivers of wine and oil, balsam and honey; the couches made out of onyx and jasper; the River Gihon with the peculiar shrubbery on its banks; the Ford-of-Tabboq, whence the Spirits embark for their

destination; the trailing clouds of all the hues of the rainbow fashioned into cooling and refreshing bowers; the Tree-of-Life which is in the midst thereof (it takes five hundred years to climb to its top, but is arranged like a ladder so that one may go up or down without difficulty); the lofty pillar which produces music continually; the three high walls each made of a different kind of fire, which surround it; the two gates of diamond through which the righteous enter into it; the six hundred thousand Angels which guard it, and the Flaming Sword, ceaselessly changing from glowing heat to freezing cold and from freezing cold to glowing heat, which turns every way to keep the living out of it,—all this Everysoul saw, saw and was overjoyed with wonderment and admiration. But what surprised him most was the splendor and sweetness of the Spirit-Beings whom he saw walking and talking, or sitting at study. Many of them seemed very old; others looked as young and fresh as if they had just arrived direct from the Palace-of-Goof in the highest of the Seven Heavens, and most of them had on eight garments of finest gossamer and double crowns of the most precious jewels,

and held eight myrtle branches in their hands.

"I wonder who they are," said Tebunah to himself.

"The little ones," answered the heavenly guide, who read his thoughts, "are here because had they been allowed to remain in the Lower-World they would have had to be sent to the other place which thou shalt behold later. Thus they will always be happy, and be a source of joy to those who are here already. As for the older ones, they too, once lived in the Palace-of-Goof, and were as reluctant to enter the drop of dew as thou wert. But when at last they found themselves in the Lower-World they did their best to perfect themselves and help others to be good, and kind, and happy. Whenever their eyes saw the sign of sorrow, or their ears heard the cry of anguish, their feet hastened to rescue, their hands to help and their mouths to soothe. Now they are blessed, blessed forevermore. Look at them, learn from them, and some day thou mayest be like unto them."

"Canst thou not let me stay here without first going to the Lower-World?" Tebunah entreated pitifully.

"No, I cannot," answered the Angel. "Not even the Seraphim and Cherubim are allowed to remain here after their mission is performed. Only those who have suffered and endured, who were tempted and resisted, who did good for its own sake regardless of the consequences, may enter and enjoy eternity here. Come, the hour grows late, and thou hast yet to see the 'Seven Habitations' of the *other place.*"

The "other place" was not very far to reach. Indeed, only a very thin partition separated it from the Garden-of-Paradise. But were it worlds apart it could not have been more different. It was, in fact, in every respect the exact opposite, except that it was sixty times as large, and its three gates, one of which is located between two palm trees near Jerusalem, was left unguarded. Hither was Tebunah carried, much against his will. Notwithstanding his protests he was forced to see the undying fire which, though fully sixty times as intense as our earthly fire, only adds to the gloom and the darkness; to smell the suffocating odor of sulphur and brimstone; and to hear the deafening and blood-curdling shrieks of those who were writhing under the flaming lashes of the

Malakhe Habbalah: "Woe is us, woe is us, woe is us! *Yea, we have sinned; yea, we have transgressed; yea, we have dealt treacherously.*"

"Who are these?" asked Tebunah, shrinking shudderingly in his drop of dew.

"These are they who instead of improving themselves and others did only what was wrong and hurtful, and the place thou now beholdest is called the Valley-of-Hinnom. Once they, too, stayed in the Palace-of-Goof, and regarded a little drop of dew as too unclean for them to enter into—even as thou didst. But when at last they found themselves in the Lower-World, nothing was for them too impure to speak or to do. Now they must pass through these rivers of fire before their filthiness is removed and they are made fit to be admitted into the Garden-of-Paradise. Look at them, learn from them, for some day thou mayest be like unto them."

The sighs and shrieks of the sufferers, the growling of the ghosts, and the suffocating smell of sulphur, made a deep impression on Tebunah, and he resolved never to complain, and to do whatever he was bidden. Thenceforth he was glad to go wherever his guardians led him, and many and various were the scenes they

showed him. Accompanied by them, he visited the places where he was to live, the house wherein he was to die, and even the grave wherein he was to lie. There was not in the whole wide world a thing he did not see, a man he did not meet, a science and an art he did not learn. These visits and studies made life so interesting that he was as happy as he had never been before.

But one day his Guardian Angels informed him that there was nothing more for them to show or to teach him, and that from now on it would be incumbent upon him to go out into a new world and search and learn for himself.

"I do so want to stay here," begged Tebunah. "Please, please, let me remain where I now am." But his begging was of no avail. "Stay here any longer thou mayest not," they insisted;

"Thou wast formed against thy will;
Against thy will must thou now be born!"

Saying this, one of them extinguished the lighted lamp above his head, and the other struck him a gentle blow on his upper lip, just underneath his nose, and, ere he could recover

from his amazement at their strange and un-Angelic behavior, Tebunah forgot all he ever saw, forgot all he ever knew, and, helpless and speechless, he opened his eyes on a queer world, amidst peculiar looking beings, who muttered unintelligible words. And poor Little Tebunah cried, and cried and cried. . .

In later years Tebunah was wont to tell with a smile that it was not so much his helplessness and speechlessness that made him cry as the sight of those peculiar beings who regarded him as a curiosity, and who kept on repeating with ill-concealed joy: *"Mazzol Tov, Mazzol Tov,* Mrs. Everybody!" or, "What a bouncing baby-boy!" or, "Isn't it cute?" or, "His Daddy all over again!" Whatever it may have been, he finally tired of crying. And, whenever the one of those strange beings who lay by his side, pressed her warm lips to his forehead, and nestled his head in her soft swelling bosom, and tucked him cozily in a downy blanket, and talked to him and crooned to him in a way which reminded him of something he must have seen in a dream, he felt as if he were in the Palace-of-Goof again, and fell smilingly asleep.

Thenceforth he cried less and less, ate more and more, and slept when he neither cried nor ate—which was most of the time. And gradually his mother ceased to be strange to him, and at last he began to grow accustomed to his environment, and learned to talk, and to walk, and to give employment to an ever increasing number of the two hundred and forty-eight strong guards and three hundred and sixty-five of the obedient servants which were awaiting his command; and he liked it so much that he no longer counted his years, as he did in Araboth, from the sixth of the Days-of-Beginning, but from the first day when he arrived in the Lower-World in the body of a little boy, and came to be known among men as Baby Everybody.

Yet, he did not long remain *Baby* Everybody. Time flew, and he grew, and as his body changed so did they change his name. After a few short years they began to call him *Boy* Everybody, and as he became quite tall they would speak of him as *Youth* Everybody, and when he seemed to have reached his full growth whenever they mentioned him they would say *Mister* Everybody. I say "they", but I do not

mean to include his mother. To her ever and always he was and remained *Baby* Everybody.

One day, much to his own surprise, he found himself to be *Lover* Everybody. It was when he casually happened to meet a little maid, sweet and comely and timid. Something about her drew him as if a thousand invisible little hands pulled at his heart-strings and would not let go. He felt that life without her would be empty and worthless, and that with her it would be fairer than his fairest dream of heaven, and happier than that of the Saints in the Garden-of-Paradise.

"How strange," once said Lover Everybody to his Beloved as they were sitting in the dusk of the twilight, "how strange that of all the maids I ever met I should love you so dearly, and feel as if I knew you from all eternity! I am almost persuaded to believe there is truth in what I read in a volume of the Talmud: "Forty days before a child is born a Bath-Qol calls and proclaims: *'Bath Ploni liploni; Ben Ploni liplonith.'* "

"And what does it mean?" asked the Beloved, who did not understand the language of the Talmud.

"It means," answered Everybody, " 'the daughter of So-and-So is to be married to Mr. So-and-So; and the son of So-and-So is to marry Miss So-and-So.' "

"Strange indeed," assented the Beloved. "The words sound familiar. I may have heard them in a dream." And they embraced, and kissed, and loved each other even more than ever. For the Beloved was no other than pretty Little Tiferet who, like Tebunah, once pranked and played in the Palace-of-Goof, and was later forced to enter a tiny drop of dew. She, too, had been shown all the marvels of life and death and eternity, and had been compelled to be born in the guise of a baby-girl. She, too, received the gentle blow on her upper lip, just under her nose, from one of her Guardian Angels, and remembered her past no more.

And the longer they loved each other, the more they loved the Lower-World in which they now made their home, and the more they found the realization of their dreams and the fulfillment of their hopes. And one after another little Sprites from the family of Everysoul came and joined the household of Everybody, sometimes in the guise of a boy baby, sometimes in

the aspect of a girl baby, and in their azure eyes and dimpled cheeks they brought with them memories and messages from Araboth, the highest of the Seven Heavens, which their parents almost forgot.

Life, however, was not one continuous holiday. Sickness came, and sorrows, and deaths and disappointments. And sometimes the burden of Care seemed too heavy to bear. Then Everybody would ask himself whether after all it is better to be than not to be?

Now, Everybody never suspected that no matter what he did and whither he went, the two Guardian Angels who forced him to leave the Palace-of-Goof went with him. Only, in Araboth they were on either side of him, while in the Lower-World they were *within* him; there he could see and hear them, here he could but know and *feel* them. Still, they were no less invincible for being invisible. They were always compelling him to do one thing or another. But the strangest thing was that ever since they made their home in his heart, they could never agree. They seemed to be at loggerheads all the time. Each sought to make him do what pleased *him,* each in turn tried to

become his master. One of them always assumed the shape of Dark-Despair, or Evil-Desire, and would threaten him or bribe him into doing what is wrong; the other would always appear in the form of High-Hope, or Good-Desire, and would plead with him to do only what is right. Poor Everybody! He was more than once at a loss to know what to do or whom to obey.

Fortunately, he almost always decided in favor of High-Hope though not as often in favor of Good-Desire. There was something about him which reminded him of Araboth, and made the atmosphere around him more soothing and comfortable. High-Hope never would say "die". Even when the present seemed gloomiest, and the future without a ray of light, he would prompt Everybody not to give up. "Carry on!" he would whisper from within his heart, "Carry on!

Thou wast formed against thy will;
Thou wast born against thy will;
Against thy will must thou now live!"

And almost always High-Hope, or Good-Desire, was right; and whenever Everybody did

what was just, or persisted in hoping for what was good, things usually came his way.

Thus Everybody lived, thus he grew ever more to love This-World, and thus he finally settled down to a quiet and comfortable old age.

Then something began to happen.

Without knowing why, it became increasingly evident to Everybody that as the days rolled by life lost more and more of its charm and sweetness. His own Little-World somehow ceased to be what it used to be. The two hundred and forty-eight strong guards and the three hundred and sixty-five obedient servants, on whom he relied, one after the other began to mutiny. The Sun, the Moon and the Stars became hid as if by clouds. His teeth grew few and weak. His back insisted on bending forward a little. His hands and his feet would tremble at the least provocation; he would be startled by the voice of a bird, though when he was spoken to he could hardly hear; and the least exertion would make him tired. Finally he began to avoid going out and mingling with

people, and preferred to sit in the chimney-corner and think only of the dim past or of the remote unknown future.

One day, as he sat alone, he thought he saw one of his Guardian Angels standing by his side, and believed he heard him ask whether he was ready.

"Ready?" repeated he; "for what?"

"For the World-to-Come," was the reply.

"And who art thou?"

"I am one of the two Stalwart Guides who forced thee into the drop of dew whilst thou wert yet in the Palace-of-Goof. Dost thou not remember me? I have been with thee and in thee ever since. Dost thou not know me? On earth they call me Dark-Despair, or Evil-Desire; but my real name is Satan, and Angel-of-Death, which is in my native tongue *Malakh Hammaveth.*"

"Be not in haste," implored Everybody. "Let me stay a little longer. I am not quite prepared; and, besides, I do so love my wife and our dear babes; yes, babes," he repeated as he noticed a grin on the face of the Angel, "though they are grown men and women. Pray, pray, carry me not away."

"Carry thee away I must, for thy time has come," sternly replied the Angel-of-Death. "Make haste, and get thee ready. I am a busy Angel." And all at once Everybody beheld before him a Being in a long, seamless and buttonless robe, who flashed a two-edged sword as he passed it hither and thither on the big nail of his left thumb in order to test its temper, and stared and glared at him with a thousand, thousand eyes which seemed to cover him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

At this horrible sight, Everybody uttered a long and loud cry. True, no human ear could hear it, unless one leaned on the threshold of the room in which he lay. Nevertheless it resounded in all the upper and lower worlds, caused the Dogs to howl as they never did before, and turned the comb on the head of the Cock white from fright. "High-Hope, High-Hope," he cried, "thou, too, wert one of my Stalwart Guides, and hast always taught me to love This-World, canst thou not now help me?"

"Help thee now I cannot," sorrowfully replied High-Hope. "Thy time hath come, and no one can escape Malakh Hammaveth's hand.

But be strong and of good courage. Greater happiness awaits thee in one moment of the World-to-Come than thou didst enjoy in all the days of thy life in This-World. Nor wilt thou be lonesome. Those who preceded thee will come to meet thee, and those whom thou leavest behind will, one by one, come to join thee; and they and thou will at last be reunited never to be parted, and live happily for ever and ever round about the Throne-of-Glory."

Hearing which, Everybody opened his eyes as if to catch a last glimpse of the dear ones who were assembled by his bed-side, and moved his lips as if to bid them a fond farewell and ask them not to grieve. But what he saw was the Holy One, praised - be - He, causing the Light-of-His-Countenance to shine in blessing upon him, and what he said was: "Praised be the Righteous Judge!"

And fearlessly and painlessly his Spirit returned to whence it came, while soft and sweet voices whispered sadly:

"Against thy will wast thou formed;
Against thy will wast thou born;
Against thy will didst thou live;
Against thy will must thou die!"

Yet, it is said, that for nearly a year Everybody's Spirit still loved to hover round the house in which he lived, and even over the newly dug grave which appeared on the House-of-Eternity the day after his death. It is also said that his Spirit was made especially happy when his children would assemble in the synagogue and recite the *Kaddish* after the services, and that whenever they did what was good he was sure to come to them and bless them. But happiest of all, it is said, was he when someone whom he helped by word or deed exclaimed on mentioning his name:

"THE MEMORY OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS A BLESSING!"

Raisin, Jacob S. B
AUTHOR
Twice-told Talmud tales
TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	DATE RETURNED

JCC OF CENTRAL NJ
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